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# TWELVE MILES FROM A LEMON.

By GAIL HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF

"WOMAN'S WORTH AND WORTHLESSNESS," "LITTLE FOLK LIFE," ETC.

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## By GAIL HAMILTON.

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# TWELVE MILES FROM A LEMON.

## I.

### *TWELVE MILES FROM A LEMON.*

When Sydney Smith declared merrily that his living in Yorkshire was so far out of the way, that it was actually twelve miles from a lemon, all the world laughed. But the world little knows—the great, self-indulgent world, that dearly loves comfort and ease and pleasure, coolness in August and warmth in November—what it is to live twelve miles from a lemon. A lemon means ice and a market, all good things in their season, and all men eager to wait upon you.

You have been staying in Lemon, let us say, for months, preying upon your betters. You have become thoroughly demoralized by the delights of the lilies, toiling not, nor spinning, and taking no thought for the morrow. But the whirligig of time has brought about its revenges. Your betters, finding no other way to disembarrass themselves of you, have shut up their city house and gone, and you must go too, and take thought for the morrow, or be stranded on a desert island. As you are borne rapidly homeward you try to return once more to practical life, and make an intense mental effort

to concentrate your thoughts, and remember what you have had for breakfast the last four months. Presently you chance upon a cracker-peddler. Crackers make a good pedestal for your wandering gods to alight on, and you buy a box.

"Do you go as far as The Old Elm?"

"Oh yes."

"Leave this box of crackers, then, in Leicester County, on the old stage road, right-hand side, low green house in a hollow, on the door-step. Never mind if the house seems closed. Leave them all the same."

You resume your journey with a light heart. To-morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. One need never starve with a dozen pounds of crackers on the door-step.

Another stage of roar and rush, and dust and cinders, and the train leaves you at your own station. Unexpected, you are unawaited. Importunate hackmen know on which side their bread is buttered, and never stroll twelve miles from a lemon; so you leave your luggage, and walk, not reluctant, along the lovely path that was never so lovely as now—a deep, hard, straggling foot-path, half hidden in the rank grass, green and dense under the gnarled old apple-trees. The slant sun, the ruddy sky, the bright, still, rich earth, alive with color, abloom with light, all the broad fields laughing with ripening harvests, all the birds mad with joy, and no war nor battle sound in all our borders—oh, the beautiful, beloved country!

But the pump will not go. Certainly not. A refractory and unprincipled pump from the beginning;

and before I have shaken from my feet the dust of travel I must arise and depart again, for twelve miles from a lemon means fifteen miles from a plumber.

No more will the lamps burn. In one the wick refuses to budge a hair-breadth up or down. In the other it will go down, but not up. Of a third the chimney is broken. A fourth has lost the cement between globe and pedestal, and cants alarmingly. A fifth drops the wick, flame and all, down into the oil, as soon as it is lighted, and scares us out of our wits. There is one evening of a stray candle or two, and a horror of great darkness, and then another journey for a fresh supply. For ten miles from a lemon is twenty miles from a lamp.

The crackers come to time, the bread rises bravely, but my soul longeth for meat. This township swarms with butchers. "Malone, we will have some chickens. No, a tenderloin steak. Put out the sign." The sign is a crimson scarf tied around a post. "I put it out this morning," says Malone, "and he did not stop." "Put it out again to-morrow morning, and we will keep watch besides." I wake early, gnawed by many cares. I wonder if the bread has risen. Will Malone oversleep, and forget it, past the proper point. If that were off my mind I think I could go to sleep again. I creep softly down stairs and strike a bee-line for the bread-pan, and Malone, who has also crept softly down her stairs for the same purpose, utters a little shriek. I withdraw, but not to sleep. We must have eggs. There is nothing to be done in the way of housekeeping without eggs. Perhaps Malone can get some at the milkman's. I will hear her when she goes out, and tell her.

No; I will tell her now, and then it will be off my mind, and I shall go to sleep. "Malone," I call softly down the stairs, "try if the milkman has any eggs; and if he has, boil them for breakfast, and make a custard for dinner."

It is an hour before butcher-time, and I shall have a cozy nap. If I had only thought to buy some oat-meal in the lemon. Twelve miles away we get no nearer to it than oats. There is a rumble of wheels. It can not be the butcher. If it *should* be, and we lose our dinner to-day as we did yesterday! I may as well jump up and look, as thoroughly awake myself by fretting about it. It is not the butcher; but oh! it is the good-butter man; and I must stop him, at all costs; and Malone is gone for the milk; and oh! where is a wrapper? and what has become of my slippers? He is stone-deaf. Would he were also stone-blind! Here is a water-proof cloak. Will he think they wear water-proof morning dresses in lemons? Oh, joy! there is Malone coming. Thank Heaven, she is not deaf. "Malone!" with a deafening shriek, if any one could hear it; but the advantage of being twelve miles from a lemon is that you can do your marketing from the chamber windows and nobody the wiser—"Malone! stop the butter-man, and engage butter for the season." Malone rushes up to him like a freebooter, and I am happy.

Only casting about in my mind whether Malone put the cucumber in water—the cucumber which grew in Quincy Market, and which I had just room for in my lamp-journey—to be roused by her voice again. "What is it, Malone?"

"The milkman hadn't any eggs." Of course he had not. Hens do not lay eggs in the country. Eggs are laid in lemons, and you must go twelve miles to get them.

"Perhaps Mr. Meiggs has some."

"No. I went there Monday and got ten—all he had."

"Suppose you try the Briarses."

"I was there yesterday, and they only had a few that had been sot on."

"Very well. I am going to bed, Malone. Do the best you can without them."

I have not begun to doze. I do not expect so much as that—only a little quiet, preparatory to the day's campaign; but there is a rattle of wheels in the distance. It is early, but it sounds like the butcher's cart. It *is* the butcher's cart. Intrenched again in the waterproof, I fling up the sash ready to pounce upon him. "Butcher!" trying to soften a yell into a decorous call.

He turns neither to the right hand nor to the left. This will never do. Courage.

"*Butcher!*"

He gives no sign. He is going by. I am desperate. I fling decorum to the winds.

"Butch-E-R-R-R!"

He does not hear the word, but the prolonged shriek pierces his ear. He stops. The household is aroused, and not exactly comprehending the situation, but each feeling a responsibility for the dinner, Babel ensues.

"Have you any tenderloin?" I cry.

Malone does not hear me from her wash-tub below,

but she sees the butcher, and, feeling the whole care on her own shoulders, cries, in a voice to wake the dead,

"We want some—*tenderloin!*"

Simultaneously, Spitzbergen flings up another window, and entirely on her own account, calls vociferously for a "steak of *tenderloin!*" And even Tranquilla feels the necessity of action, and from the depths of the bed-clothes sends forth a muffled shriek for "*tenderloin!*" Thus suddenly, out of profound silence, the house resounds from turret to foundation-stone with the clangor of tenderloin, and the bewildered butcher stares blankly and can make out nothing for the hullaballoo. There is a short pause of exhaustion and experiment. I infer that the others have become, somehow, aware of the posture of affairs, and, taking advantage of the lull, begin to put my inquiry in a decent and Christian manner—to find that they have all arrived at the same conclusion, and are piping forth again a chaos of tenderloin; but Malone holds the key of the situation, marches to the front, extricates both butcher and tenderloin, and comes back brandishing her beefsteak triumphant. Whereupon the house subsides into its normal silence.

City folk undoubtedly believe that early vegetables spring from the soil, but we country dwellers know better. We look abroad upon the earth, and see the wide stretch of field and sky, and the ever-shifting panorama of the clouds, and the stately pomp of the sun on his daily march, and know perfectly well that it was all made to look at, and a good enough end is that. But when we want any thing to eat, we take a basket and go by rail twelve miles to the lemon. And it is

not convenient. The country is perfect, if man could live by bread and meat alone, but he can not. He wants butter also, and fresh eggs, and early pease, and beets, and, lettuce, and above all, ice—the art preservative of all arts.

If you lived in Calcutta you could have ice in galore. All the ships that go sailing over the sea would fetch you ice, and the carts would cart it to your door, and the vendor would clench it into your cellar, and you would be cool even under the India sun of an India summer through the well-kept cold of an American winter. But if you lived on the shores of the Polar Sea you might whistle for ice. Trade, unlike charity, does not begin at home. If you will buy by the shipload you shall be served, but there is no lens strong enough to make the ice-king see your one little refrigerator. "We only deal by wholesale," says my lord. And when you resort to some small German principality in the ice realm, whose traffic must perforce be retail, the man inquires your whereabouts and measures your distances, and is afraid it is too far off for him to get home in season to load, and perhaps his employer will not permit it, but he will see. So he sees and comes, and we are all servant of servants unto this brother of ours that he be not hindered. "Malone, there is the ice-man! Run quick and open the cellar doors! Spitzbergen, fetch a bucket of water to rinse the ice! Tranquilla, is there a blueberry pie extant? Bring a knife and fork quick, and a plate." And we strive to melt his icy sympathy with smiles and bland words and toothsome repast, that he may eat and come again,

which he does "unbeknownst" (as the good President used to say) to his employer; and we harden our hearts and sear our consciences; and serve up a triangle of blueberry pie every other day, and say that his relations between himself and his employer are no affair of ours. Every man has his price. Let every housekeeper have her ice. Heaven forbid that a morsel of pie or cake or custard should stand between us and comfort—not to say health and economy.

Till another king arises who knows not Joseph, and will not even come within the sphere of our blandishments. For you can not bribe a man in open day on the king's highway, saying unto him, "Smuggle a lump of ice into my refrigerator three times a week, and I will not only pay your master full price, but will give you a lunch besides." So your fountain of ice fails, and you must henceforth live from hand to mouth.

That is the difference between living in a lemon and living twelve miles away from it. In the first case you are besought to buy. In the second you beseech others to sell.

"Why do you not raise things for yourself, and be independent of butchers and bakers and butter-makers?" asks the astute and inexperienced Lemonite.

"Raise *things!* What, for instance?"

"Eggs, then, to begin with."

Because eggs are no sooner hatched than all the forces of nature rise up together to destroy them. Hatched, do I say? Before they are hatched the foe comes. While they are yet eggs the cats smell them out and suck them. When they have broken shell and become

chickens, the first thing they do is to get lost. If there is a bit of late snow it shall go hard but they will roam around till they find it, and then they will stand still on it and shiver and die. If there is one grass-plot deeper and thicker and wetter than another, they will make a rush for that — anywhere so they can shiver and die. Then the hawks come down from the sky, and the skunks come up from the swamps, and the weasels come out of the woods, and the minks and the foxes and the woodchucks from their holes among the rocks, and make a dead set at the chickens. In vain the mother hen clucks alarm and hate. A hawk swoops down into your very door-yard and bears away a struggling chick in his talons. Now that the horse is stolen we will lock the stable-door. "Tranquilla, take your book into the piazza and keep watch." "A hawk! a hawk!" cries Tranquilla presently, in wild excitement, and we rush to the door with immense hootings and howlings, but no hawk is visible. The happy hen is peacefully brooding her young and gives no sign. "It must have been a mistake," you say, quite out of breath. "No, it was no mistake," exclaims Tranquilla. "It was a hawk; I saw him plainly; and he went 'caw! caw!'" "Oh! Tranquilla, go into the house." Foolishness is bound up in the heart of the Lemonite, and he never will know a hawk from a crow, though he see it twelve miles off! Now a thunder-cloud gathers. The forked lightnings flash red and angry. The thunder growls. The rain comes fast and furious. Of course the chickens are off in the far pastures gobbling grasshoppers. There they come scampering home, terrified, in hot

haste. Their wet feathers are tucked away from their little sticks of legs, which look twice as long and twice as slender as they beat home, frantic. And trotting placidly among them come four little skunks, *haud ignota loquor*. Is this tempest, then, the beginning of the end of the world, and does that quiet quartette presage the millennium — the lion and the lamb, the chicken and the skunk, lying down together? Alas! no, unless — as some one says — the one be inside the other. When the storm is over the skunks will grow up and devour the neighbors' chickens—not mine, for to-morrow morning I shall go out to find my chickens dead, one and all, of rats; and that is why there are no eggs twelve miles from a lemon.

But at least you might raise vegetables, which fox and weasel do not devour, nor cats and rats break through and steal.

So you might, only labor all goes to Lemons, and twelve miles away seven women have to lay hold of one man to get a beet-bed hoed, and then find that, in the confusion of the moment, he has planted beans instead of beets, and cabbages instead of sweet-corn. But there are early potatoes. Yes, and earlier oxen who tear down your wall and leap into your garden, and devour what they can and trample what they can not. You drive them out with much brandishing of bean-poles and broomsticks—the beautiful patient-eyed creatures, so strong and meek—and their master makes a thousand apologies, and promises that they shall not trespass again; but the black heifer from the next pasture does, and she too is repulsed in force; and then

comes a wail from Tranquilla, "Oh! the oxen are in again!" and off you go, lance in rest, to find the trespassing oxen have turned into neighbor Nelly's lovely Alderney cow, quietly feeding in her own fields. "Tranquilla! Tranquilla! will you never have done discovering mares' nests? Is not the way hard enough, but you must make mountains of mole-hills?" But in two days your own eyes discern a horned beast thrusting in among your vegetables, and your blood rises. You will see whether there is to be any protection to life or property! "Who is the field-driver?"

Nobody knows. I go to my friend the Forester. "Who is the field-driver?"

"What's the matter? My cow got into your lot?"

"I never thought of its being your cow, but perhaps it is. It's a red cow."

"No, 'tain't mine. Mine is a Jersey."

"I am glad of that. Now I am tired of driving cows out of my yard. You make me pay taxes, and you won't let me vote; and the least you can do is to keep the cows out of my garden."

"That's so. Can't say nothin' agin that."

"Then who is the field-driver?"

"Well, there ain't exactly no field-driver, like. You see 'tain't no great of an office, and nobody hain't much hankering after it. So when they nominate 'em at town-meetin' they decline. So you have to fasten on somebody that ain't there, and they appinted Stephen Barrows. We got him there! But Stephen, you see, he ain't took the oath, an' won't take it, and so he hain't no responsibility; so we're kind of satisfied all round!"

"Beautiful legislation! How complicate, how wonderful, is man! Meanwhile, the cow's in the meadow, the sheep's in the corn, and isn't there any way to get them out except with bean-poles?"

"Well, yes. You can advertise in three towns that there is such a cow trespassing, and when the owner gets her you can make him pay her board, reckonin' in damages."

An easy way to turn a cow out of your garden! But that is why corn will not grow twelve miles from a lemon.

At least I will lift up my voice in testimony. Preaching never comes amiss. "My forester," I say, gently, taking a comfortable seat on the wood-pile, "I have a great regard for you—"

"I'm glad any body has."

"But don't you occasionally feel ashamed to think you are a man?" He rests on his hand-saw, but without uncrooking the pregnant hinges of his knee, and answers with a broad, bright smile:

"Well, now, if I'd had any hand in't it might be worth while."

"Here you make all the laws—rising up early and making them—and an enterprising cow jumps over them before breakfast."

"Well, there ain't nothin' perfect, you know. You can't make a law so strong but what a stray critter'll break it now and then."

"But now look at me, and remember all the while, with a pang at the heart, that you are a man. Here is Barbara Brooke working like a beaver every day of her

life. By hard labor, early and late—up in the morning at four, and in bed Heaven knows when—by going without butter on her bread or sugar in her tea, she has managed to get together money enough to buy a tiny house. What then do you do, you men, but pounce upon it? You don't wait for her to move into it; before the door-steps are laid or made you pounce upon it, and demand of her eighty cents taxes. Now, as a man and a gentleman, don't you think that is mean?"

"Lud-a-massy! Don't come down on me! I didn't do it. I ain't selectman."

"Yes, you are selectman. All men are selectmen. They select themselves out to make the laws, and that is the way they do it."

"But you must have tax laws, and you can't make no choice about who owns the property. Law is law."

"But the law to tax property is no more inexorable than the law to protect property. You are under no stronger moral obligation to tax Barbara's house than you are to protect my garden. But you manage matters so that a whole herd of cows trampling through my grounds are invisible to you, and I must traverse three towns to be rid of them; but the moment poor Barbara has a roof over her head you turn all eyes to see, and all hands to grasp. Oh! aren't you ashamed?"

"Well, it don't look generous like, I vum. But 'twon't be no great, one way or the other."

Eighty cents, and that is the meanest of all. If it were eighty dollars it would be worth while. The best

of it is that Barbara vows she won't pay it. Here is "woman's rights" with a will.

"And indeed," says Barbara, "I went up to Rob Jones's and gave him such a jawin' an' scoldin' as he niver had in his life. Payin' taxes, indeed! I tould him whoever came in for 'em should never go out again! I'd have the tea-kettle on the stove, and it's scalding water he should get in his face for the taxes!" And honest Barbara rocks back and forth, and makes the heavens ring with merriment at the idea of any puny man coming to demand her rightful money; and Barbara's heart is strong and her arm is brawny, and I think the man who troubles her is very likely to be in hot water.

For if twelve miles from a lemon is twelve miles from the law, why should not Barbara be a law unto herself?

My friend the forester thinks she will be, and evidently his heart is in the right place.

II.

## *LEMON-DROPS.*

It must be confessed that the rigors of rustic exile are immensely mitigated by the friendly incursions of a class of—men, I was about to say, but I remember that women are not unknown to its ranks—a class of persons whose benevolent mission is to furnish us outside barbarians with the appliances of civilization. In the vulgate they are termed peddlers. I call them missionaries. Like other missionaries, they are sometimes harshly entreated. There are those who look upon them as direct emissaries of the Evil One, roaring up and down the earth, seeking whom they may devour. To these, a peddler is but a burglar in disguise. He comes with goods by day to spy out the land and see where he may come *for* goods by night. Nor is the suspicion entirely unfounded. "There's odds in deacons," the country folk say; how much more in peddlers. My own especial prejudice is against the peddler who carries a little black glazed carpet-bag, and in favor of him who comes in a large, long, high, red cart. *He* give hostages to society. His horse and cart are a pledge of respectability and reliability. His cart is full of curious and convenient little compartments, and in these compartments are curiously bestowed all manner of treasures in Britannia and tin. The top of his cart is—not crowd-

ed, but—ornamented with wooden-ware, rows of brooms, nests of bright blue tubs and bright yellow buckets, and the regular ridges of white wash-boards, every thing fresh and perfect in its kind. It is a New Curiosity-shop, whose salesman is never ill-natured and never in a hurry, but always ready to reveal to you his goods and chattels, whether you buy or whether you forbear. And the charm of it is, that you buy without money. He does not seem to care for money. He rather prefers "truck." He takes from you what is old and worn-out, and, to you, worthless, and gives you a brand-new coffee-pot! Is not that Christianity? The only shabby-looking things about his establishment are the great canvas bag and the tarnished tin-kettle that hang and swing from the rear of his cart. But they, like all the rest of him, are means of grace.

"Any tin-ware to-day?" he asks you, cheerily; and when he has turned over his whole stock for your pleasuring, and has explained to you all the mysteries of his improvements and his patents, and you have selected a freezer for the ice that you can not get, and a new-fangled egg-beater for the eggs that no hen lays, and a lemon-grater for the fruit that is twelve miles off, and begin to fumble around in your mind for the whereabouts of your purse—then, up speaks this angel and minister of grace, this missionary of the new dispensation, and asks:

"Any rags or paper to dispose of?"

Of course you have. What else do you take the Boston *Daily* for, and the *Congregationalist*, and the New York *Nation*, and the *Weekly Post*, and the *Woman's*

*Journal?* All the pieture-papers we save alive; and from the ladies' magazines we cut the gay-colored prints, and pile them in great piles in the garret, for the amusement of the little ones, who love nothing better than foraging in these unfrequented places. All the rest—newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, learned reports, statistics, catalogues, Fourth of July orations, and—oh, tell it not in Gath!—sermons; all the torn letters and used-up envelopes of the waste-basket we bring forth from their hiding-places in barrel and box, and cast into that huge tin-kettle, and sell it for three, five—yes, and when for so long a time all was quiet on the Potomac, it went as high as seven and eight cents a pound. And here is the bag of white rags, all sorted—the bag is a little gnawed by mice, so you may take it bag and all, and if the mouse be within, let him stay and weigh; and the bag of colored rags—little worth, but worth that little.

"No old iron?"

Certainly; a box of rusty nails, and the Franklin stove, and a stove door that is well wedged into the barn floor—you will have to wrench it hard to get it out, my peddler—and a cracked tea-kettle, and an iron tray, and—I suppose this old bit of lead is not good for any thing?

"Oh yes; we pay five cents a pound for lead!"

Bless me, we shall make our fortunes! There is nothing in the shape of metal which a tin-peddler will not buy, except hoop-skirts, and a hoop-skirt seems to be the one thing on earth for which there is no secondary use, no future life, except in Mr. Edward Everett Hale's "Skeleton in the Closet," where sundry superan-

nuated hoop-skirts prove the ruin of the Confederate navy, army, ordnance, and treasury, and, ultimately, the capture of Jefferson Davis; but, I must say, I strongly suspect, notwithstanding Mr. Hale's well-known character for veracity, that those hoop-skirts were manufactured out of the whole cloth!

But all else is fish that comes to the tin-peddler's net. And it gives you such a comfortable feeling. It is not only that you have made a general clearance of rubbish, but you are in the line of Divine Providence. You are working in the Divine way. Nature wastes nothing, either in material or process. Man can not destroy material, but he may waste work. Your rusty nails are not only useless, but unsightly, and black with impending lock-jaw. In the tin-peddler's hands they are on the road to a new life of usefulness. The paper which you cram into your fire and fancy out of the way *is* out of the way. It will, indeed, presently become paper again, but it is by the roundabout road of smoke and ashes, and corn and cotton. Whereas, in the tin-peddler's hands it is next door to pulp, and comes back to paper by a short cut. You are Providence in so far as you have saved Providence several intermediate stages, which is the same thing as having accomplished them yourself. To all of which the tin-peddler assents, though in a dazed way, and I am not sure, after all, that the connection between himself and Providence is quite clear in his own mind. But he is a cheerful man, disposed to chat, and to amiable views of life; and, when I half-deprecate the trash which I have piled up beneath his steelyards, and am afraid he will think I am not a

good housekeeper, he replies, comfortably, that people always have a heap of things to pick up when it comes spring—(thou good, consoling creature, it is midsummer!)—and his wife always finds odds and ends accumulate in winter, especially as she is not well. She, last winter, only went from kitchen to bedroom. I hope that he takes good care of her. He does, indeed. She wanted him to give her a sleigh-ride, but he told her he would give her a sleigh-ride when it came wheeling. He should certainly take good care of her, for it is too much expense to get another. Here it is my turn to open my eyes and meditate on Divine Providence. "Yes," he adds, "there is not only the expense of burying one wife, but there is always a good deal of expense in getting another. Then, the second wife never quite makes good the first." I am somewhat appeased, and put my head out of the shell again, and ask if he has any children.

Yes, he has five. If they were all living there would be a dozen of them. What do I think of that?

Unutterable things, but I hope they are all good.

"Well, there's worse children than mine. There's children that gives their parents more trouble than mine. My oldest boy, he's twenty. He's loafing to-day. The boss wanted him to stay yesterday (Sunday), so he's loafing to-day. Do you know—you must excuse me for taking such a liberty—but you remind me very strongly of my wedding-day."

"Do I? Why?"

"You're just about the build of my wife, and she wore a dress exactly that color. I could almost swear

it was the same. A little way off I should think it was she. You must excuse me."

Excuse you! Oh cunning peddler! Why, it is a compliment. I suppose your wife never looked handsomer to you than she did then.

"Well, I don't know about that. I think she looks handsomer to me to-day than she ever did."

That is better still. Have I unwittingly struck my pick into a placer?

"I can say this—the longer I live with her the better I like her."

"And how long is that?"

"Twenty-two years. I saw her first in November, at church. That was in the Old Country. I went to hear what we called a reformed fox-hunter. He was a drinking, gambling fellow; but he was a gentleman's son. His father said it would ruin him to have him turn Methodist; but he saved him twenty thousand dollars a year by it."

So I have not only rid myself of my rags, and enriched myself with coffee-pots and egg-beaters and forty-four cents hard money—that is, currency, the hardest money going—but I have also found in this gay red cart a fine old English church, ivy-hung and fair to look upon; and within a fresh young English girl, ruddy and winsome, and a stalwart English lad, with honest eyes and manly face, who seeks heaven under the gypsy hat rather than on the fox-hunting lips; and finds it the sooner, perhaps. For over the hills and far away, across the sea, and into the wide, foreign land, the fresh young English girl follows her English lad-lover and husband

in one now these twenty years. Little ones come—and go, alas!—for wisdom lingers; but happiness lingers, too; and the English lad, now a sturdy, handsome man, in middle life, wears a face of content and repose; and I know the little lass, albeit taking somewhat less kindly to our alien climate, and grown, perhaps, a thought too pale and thin, is yet a gentle and happy woman, wearing her matronly charms with no less winning a grace than she wore her maiden freshness in the ivied church of Merrie England.

See, now, what comes from putting yourself in the line of Providence, and selling your old rags!

Of another sort, O Lemonians! are those representatives whom you send us with the little black glazed carpet-bags; and we spew them out of our mouths. *Non tali auxilio!* Better bereft of lemon-drops forever than moisten thirsty lips with bitter draughts. For what is in those uncanny carpet-bags? Needles and thread and sewing-silk and pins and brooches, they say; but we know it is burglars' tools—jimmies and false keys, and all things which do not make for peace. We will none of them. If your shops overflow with wares, and your streets are grass-grown for lack of buyers, go West and fell trees and make wildernesses blossom; but do not send your emissaries twelve miles into our wilderness to profane it with cotton lace and dollar jewelry, and possible picking of postern locks. Such evil-minded folk march boldly up to the door, do not wait to be bidden in, scarcely even to ring or knock, but entering unwelcome, with impudent eyes roving around your room, ask if you want a new kind of glass-

es, concavo-convex, double lens, Heaven knows what, that will enable you to see around a corner with the back of your head. And though you assure the inquirer that your eyes are perfect, and that you would not look around a corner if you could, the creature is hardly persuaded, but continues to unfold his brazen glasses with brazen fingers, till the unwearying monotony of your No makes an impression even upon his brazen brain. Does he then depart in peace? Do not flatter yourself. He steps quickly enough down the gravel walk; but if you do not hear the gate click duly, go around through the dining-room, and you will find his wicked nose flattened against the east parlor window. There rage supplies you with courage, and you fling the front-door wide open and order him off the premises, which order he obeys with much gibbering and gesticulating, that may be deprecation or defiance —you can not tell. Thus he goes through the village, stirring up sedition, and reporting at each house that he has sold a pair of glasses to each resident in all the preceding houses. And when you tell your thrilling tale to Hassan the Turk, with intent to rouse him to reprisals, at least to the extent of having this budding villain well watched out of town, he only says, with stolid indifference, "A cat may look upon a king. Is there any thing in your parlor too good to be seen?"

Infinitely better than these, though inferior to Honestus of the red cart, is he who comes with a pack on his back. These have diminished in numbers of late years, but they used to be frequent callers, and their coming was a pleasant exhilaration. Almost always Germans,

small of stature, wiry, strong, and pleasant-voiced, shrewd and careful, they deposit their packs on the kitchen floor, and unfold rich parcels of silk and linen that might tempt even a connoisseur. How they can travel under such a weight is astonishing; and how they can recompense themselves among us plain country folk, who call a family council and make a pilgrimage to Mecca whenever we buy a silk gown, is inexplicable; but travel they do, or did, revolving in their orbits as regularly as the planets, till we came to have a friendly familiarity with their friendly faces. So, no doubt, they found their account in it; and many of them, I dare say, have by this time invested the money they made in our village, thrown down the pack, opened shop, become merchant princes, and been murdered in New York—an encouragement to all poor and industrious boys not to despise the day of small things.

Next to the glazed carpet-bags do we hate and abhor the tall clerical-looking men who accost us with a jaunty air, and ask us to accept a box of soap as a present! We suspect these Greeks in any case, but, bearing gifts, we know there is a cat under the meal. And when they ape the clergy, Heavens! how we ache to choke them with their white chokers! O Lemonians, keep such trash in your own borders! To us it is rank, and smells to heaven.

And look well, Lemonia, we country folk pray you, to the ways of the agents whom you send down upon us like frogs and lice and locusts for multitude. Send us women, if you like, or send us men, but let them be ignorant. A little learning is such a dangerous thing.

The people who come around with apple-parers and pencil-sharpeners, dress-making systems and new-fashioned lamp-chimneys, are well enough. We do not object to being reminded by such tokens that we are within twelve miles of the Lemon; but when the religious newspaper-agents bore into your house like worms of the dust as they are, and ask your housekeeper about your way of life and your personal history, why, you would like to grill them over a slow fire. They have just intelligence enough to be curious, but not enough to be decent; and decency should be well burned into them. The apple-corers are modest and professional; but these literary frogs and toads evidently believe, with Job's sorry set of friends, that they are the people, and wisdom shall die with them. You are not helped by instructing your door-tender to give to all a bland but blank refusal, for that only keeps out the good ones. The pachydermata, the articulata, the vermes, will still worm themselves through to their own destruction.

We know that we are outside barbarians, far off from ice and lemons and green pease; but we are often moved, O Lemonia! to exclaim with Sidney, thy necessity is greater than ours. When I see a poor man traveling up hill and down across our country-side, expecting to earn his bread-and-butter by the commission he is to receive on the sale of his books, and think of the sparse farm-houses where he is to sell them, the farmers mowing the marshes knee-deep in salt-water, and the women rising at midnight to cook their suppers, I am just not moved to tears. Surely the lines

have fallen to you in stony places. Is there no corn in Egypt that you must come up to Canaan to gather these scanty gleanings? The minister may generally be counted on as secure prey, and sometimes a freak will take a farmer or two of us, to the peddler's advantage.

"These Bibles are cheap and well got up," says the Bible-vender, who understands how to mingle religion and trade in a shrewd composite.

Yes, you answer; but you have Bibles enough already.

"But so has your neighbor over yonder," says the Bible-man. "He said he had Bibles enough, but he had just as lief leave part of his property in Bibles as any thing else; and he bought three."

If the agents who have somewhat to give in return for our well-fingered currency find us a hard row to hoe, how rocky must be the field to those gentlemen who come intent on begging, "pure and simple!" They seldom go from house to house, but take to the pulpit. Rapidly and statistically they unfold the origin and operation of their plans, and cheerfully we listen, quite well knowing we are masters of the situation, and shall present a firm front to the foe, but perfectly willing to hear what he has to say, and glad our own minister has a breathing-place thrown in. The American Board and the Home Missionaries we look after regularly, under the lead of our own shepherd; the few "town poor" we maintain in a style that dazzles the neighboring nabobs; but when it comes to Sailors' Aid Societies, we query how many of our greenbacks would get into the

sailors' pockets. As for the converted Jews, we rather think we like them best the natural way. And really it is a pretty joke, you Western colleges stretching out your hands from your waving wheat-fields, your inland seas white with commerce, your cities running riot with riches, and claiming tribute from our stern and rock-bound coast! Still, if it pleases you to come to us in appeal, come. You little know the invincibility and the invisibility of our defenses; but come. We will feast you as long as you stay, for we have a saving faith in bread-and-butter, pies, and preserves. We will listen to you with decorum; and if a ten-cent scrip or a ragged quarter will serve your purpose, we will drop it in, rather than the contribution-box should go by us without stopping.

"But if them fellers want more larnin," says Uncle 'Miah, having placidly sat the sermon out, and speaking now the wisdom of his eighty toiling years—"if them fellers want more larnin, let 'em come down here and go a term to Esther, and carry on my farm to halves."

And all the people shall say, Amen! So, Messieurs mes frères, come down and present your "cause" to us as often as you like.

III.

## *HEMLOCK POISON.*

No one can suspect how much trouble it would have been to make the world, until he has tried his own hand at world-making.

Once we wanted a hill where nature had spread a plain. We undertook to raise one. A hill looks easy enough. For days, for weeks, men and horses and carts were digging, hauling, loading, and tipping, and it was not much of a hill after all. We came to the conclusion that it is easier to make a very large hole than a very small hill. When you have floundered in the dirt many days, when drags have crisscrossed your grounds in all directions, and harrows have scratched, and rollers have smoothed, and yet you need a magnifying glass to see where your hill is, you are prepared to read with new admiration, "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

Nevertheless, the spring-world ever calls you afresh. When the snow melts, when the brooks are unbound, and the skies grow tender, and the brown buds swell, the still small voice of the coming summer woos you into loving alliance with Nature fashioning the Earth to beauty.

I suppose we are the proprietors of the poorest tract of land on the North American Continent; and the

worst cultivated. Something is sure to be planted that we do not want, and something to be left out that we do want. What with cabbages and cows, and white beans hanging forgotten, brown and shriveled, to the shuddering vines for a mildew and a blight, till the snows drift over them, Hassan the Turk says there are three crops in which we excel: those which are planted and do not come up, those which come up and are not gathered, and those we do not plant at all.

But we like farming so much that we can not withdraw our hand. We would rather fail in that than succeed in any thing else. So we go on every spring, digging a little wildly, perhaps, but digging, harrowing our fields and our friendly farmers' feelings, no doubt, at one fell swoop, and trying to save money enough in other ways to keep our agricultural extravagance from presently bringing us upon the town.

But it did not seem extravagant to attempt to raise a few pines and hemlocks. Having tried every thing else in vain, we turned with humility to these hardy plants, and remembered that the destruction of trees is supposed to be the cause of our long and severe droughts, and hoped to deserve well of the republic, besides sitting under our own shadows with great delight. Hassan the Turk said our soil was so much like the soil to which pines are native that he did not believe they would detect a change. We might steal a march on them, as it were, and they would begin growing before they discovered it was our land, and then it would be too late to stop.

Oh! the pleasure of the work! The smell of the

damp, upturned earth, the loveliness of the fragrant, dark, dewy woods where you go to see how the Lord God sets his pines because you wish yours to look just like them! Alas! how soon you find that you follow Nature as little Iulus did his father, with unequal steps. The trees of the Lord spring up untrained, in careless places, in graceful and exuberant confusion, while your groves are bent on assuming stiff geometrical figures. Downing—is it, who recommends you to fling a handful of potatoes into the air and set your trees where they come down? We darkened the air with flying and falling potatoes, and they alighted in one heap. Having spent a whole morning in a strenuous, and we hoped, not unsuccessful endeavor to reproduce the charming irregularity of nature, our withdrawing footsteps are arrested by the anxious voice of a conscientious workman, "I don't know as you care—but—seems to me—them trees ain't in a straight line!"

And so your forests are set a-waving, and the beauty of it is that you have no weary waiting, for they are a joy from the first moment of their arrival. A hemlock grows larger, but it is never more symmetrical or interesting than when it is first set. A pine is as tall at its transplanting as a rose-bush in its old age. Yesterday a waste of pebbly hill-side, a level stretch of green—to-day the morning breeze on tree-tops, flickering shadows on the grass, the poise of robins on the branches, blue-birds flashing in and out, and the whir of humming-birds on their way to honeysuckles.

But sweet Nature is cruel. No sooner is my little venture made than the stars in their courses fight

against me. My trees fairly rooted, and such a drought comes as has not been known in Israel these years. The trees that were to be transplanted with so much of their mother earth around them that they were expected never to find it out, began to show signs of homesickness. We water them, but what are a dozen watering-pots among so many? We build our hopes on anniversary-week, but the heavens have forgotten the Tract Society, and their clergy give but dry disquisitions. My greenery makes a brave fight. It has nothing but a little mulch to encourage it, yet it smiles on me and clings to life. But a saint could not hold out forever against the raging, pitiless sun, this dry, parching, dust-fraught wind, and the tassels of the pines must droop, and the stocky, sturdy hemlocks put on an ominous yellow.

"Oh, Hassan!" cries the voice of dismay, "what shall I do if my hemlocks die?"

"You have something still left to live for," answers, cheerfully, Hassan the Turk. But the iron has not entered his soul.

"Do you think they will die?"

"Guess so. I set out a hedge of hemlocks once. Paid sixty dollars for it. *They* all died."

"Oh! why did you not tell me sooner?"

"So you will fall foul of me! Well, hemlocks always were a dangerous plaything. Socrates got the first lick, and I shall bring up the rear in good company."

I strongly object to the word *lick*, but that is what he said. I only answered:

"It is really sad to hear you speak with such levity in the presence of so great a trouble."

"Trouble? You have nothing on earth to trouble you but four dead hemlocks on one side of your gate, and five live ones on the other. Do you want me to put on a weed for that?"

"But tell me what to do. Perhaps something might still save them."

"Well, my advice is, that you immediately take a fresh cry over your hemlocks, then pull them all up, and write an account of it for *The New England Farmer*, and make him pay for them, dead or alive, two prices if dead, and hurry up, or they will live yet, and you will be too late."

A man of ability who is willing to give his mind to a subject is a very useful person; but when he approaches a topic with unseemly frivolity, he is a great deal worse than nobody.

Yet, in spite of Turks and Tract Societies, the trees lived. A very few went desperately on to yellow death, but we cut them down darkly at dead of night, as they buried Sir John Moore,

> "By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
> And the lanterns dimly burning,"

and the neighbors never missed them. Ever is it easier to bear our misfortunes than the comments of our friends upon them, as Lacon saith. A few hemlocks also gave up their beautiful ghosts, but we luckily had an outlying surplus plantation wherewithal to fill the breach; so, with flying banners, we went on gayly, till St. Johnswort flaunted on the hills, and golden-rod rose by every way-side, and we knew that Autumn was holding out her sceptre for the world's encouragement.

Then again anguish pierced my heart, for again blight seemed to settle on the pines. Their green spikes re-assumed that baleful yellow, only, unlike the past, their tips staid green. I scorned to ask questions that might seem to be begging for re-assurance, but said to my friend the forester, in an indifferent sort of way, "I am afraid I am going to lose my trees. They seem to be turning." I cherished a faint hope he would say they always did so.

"Yes," said he, promptly, "I thinks likely you won't have more'n three or four left by spring!"

After the first spasm of disgust, I excused him by reflecting that he made no pretense to science, but contented himself with doing with his might whatever his hand found to do. But my friend the President is a man who can speak of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. So I said to him, with the same nonchalant air, "By-the-way, my trees are going to die. They are all turned yellow."

"Are they? Oh! pity, pity!" he exclaimed, with a sympathy almost better than pines.

Mark now. A few days afterward I was driving in the woods, and, behold! the trees of the good God were all turning yellow, just like mine!

It was no dying at all. It was just as I had vaguely hoped—the way of a pine-tree in the autumn; and neither the practical man of the axe nor the theoretical man of science knew any thing about it. O Lucifer, Son of the Morning, how much of thy reputation is founded in the ignorance of thy followers!

The cold days came, and we left our pines and hemlocks to their winter work and their winter rest, flourishing like a green bay-tree. We thought they had stood the crucial test, and might

> "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages."

We talked lovingly of their beauty, and wondered how much they would have grown by the time we and the summer should have returned to them. The dreadful, the relentless, the irresistible winter came—came and staid. The slow, chilled spring followed, laggard and lame. But life was full of warmth and brightness and color, and I feared no evil. In common with all the world, we pitied Peshtigo and bewailed Chicago, though I may whisper in an aside that the largest and loveliest diamonds I ever saw were hanging upon large and lovely Chicago sufferers! We watched with anxious eagerness the perils and privations of snow-blocked travelers journeying "from the land of the Sunrise toward the Sunrising," or fleeing the ice-fields of Maine for the mild rigors of Lake Wenham, and never dreamed that we had any thing at stake in the thermometer. But, alas! as soon as the country was thawed out, ominous messages began to trickle through. John Baptist cried first in the wilderness:

"I am afraid winter has slain many of your evergreens. My own hemlocks have half their tops winter-killed, and many of my pines are dead. The little shelter afforded by the old fence and those venerable apple-trees which you were prevailed on to spare for my sake (I had resisted his passionate entreaties to cut

them down! Never while a bluebird lives, or a thrush sings, or an oriole flames, never while a home-born potato is problematical and no amount of horticulture will let us have pease, will I lay the axe at the root of any tree. Shall I, who can not raise so much as a bush, presume to raze a tree?) may probably have saved your hedge. The time between life and death is very thin. The heavy wind at zero seemed to cut the poor trees to the heart. Your hill would also help yours."

In a world like this it does seem useless to anticipate trouble, and I only answered tartly, "Do you mean that all your hemlocks are half dead, or half your hemlocks are all dead?" It was a mere quibble, and flippant enough, but it turned aside the poisoned dart for a time.

Presently came another messenger malign.

"Your pines are turning yellow. Ask your scientific President if that is a good sign."

I did not heed the covert sneer, but my heart misgave me for yellow pines in spring. Botany is silent, and analogy can not bear false witness against its neighbor. Nor am I called to fight a foreboding, but a fact.

Practical Common Sense anon took up the parable, and piped.

"More than half your hemlocks in the incipient hedge are dead—at least look dead, but may yet spring up from the roots."

Thanks for the intended consolation; but as we seldom expect a large crop of apples from hemlocks, and the look is all there is of them, I would rather they

should be dead and look alive, than be alive and look dead.

Artless Innocence, in letter number four, prattled simply, but stingingly,

"About all your little trees that you planted are dead."

Then Job arose and said, "Of course they are dead. What inducement had they to live? Hear what the newspaper saith: 'The destruction of evergreens was general over New England. Mr. M., the nurseryman, lost over five thousand dollars by damage to his nursery-bed of evergreens.' And again: 'The pines and cedars everywhere, even in the parks about New York, and the rhododendrons and the strawberries, are badly hurt.' And yet again: 'All the young evergreens in New York and Massachusetts are dead. The warm weather of February started the sap, and the cold weather of March froze them. It is a severe blow to thousands of nurserymen who gained a livelihood by raising evergreens for market. It will take years to replace them. In Central Park, New York, one would be led to think fire had run through it, as not a green tree is spared.'"

Of course I never undertook to stem such a tide as this. I planted my pines in good faith, trusting to the promise of the rainbow. Nothing that money or mulch could do was spared, but I never took a contract to thaw out the North Pole. When lovely Nature stoops to folly of this stupendous sort, the only thing left for any respectable hemlock is to wring his bosom, and to die. Surely Wisdom is justified of her children.

But why should Nature be so churlish? When I am trying in my small way to beautify the world, why does she hinder? I have no Titanic ambition to gratify. I do not aim to rival her Californian Big Trees, or to outshine and outshade her Amazonian forests. I only seek to transfer the unappropriated beauty of her wildernesses to my own door-yard. I will not rob her of a tithe of her charm. I will but gather a little of it to my heart. If she will not help, can she not at least let me alone? She sees me scratching the earth with feeble fingers for a few forlorn bushes. From her multitudinous and magnitudinous tree-tops, from her wild, wide, trackless forests, she might well laugh me to scorn. But is it noble, is it magnanimous in her to rise up and send down upon us the coldest winter we have had for twenty-five years just to freeze me out? Would I have treated Caius Cassius so?

Meanwhile, what pleasure can be derived from three hundred feet of hemlock skeletons filing past the front door, that pleasure I enjoy.

> "Far or forgot to me is near;
> Shadow and sunlight are the same;
> The vanished gods to me appear;
> And one to me are shame and fame."

And Hassan the Turk immediately added with distinguishing emphasis,

> "The strong gods Pine for my abode,
> And Pine in vain the sacred Seven."

A romantic visitor, fresh from our charming neighbor's Brier Hill, tried to continue the spell by naming us "Pine Lodge." We smiled and simpered, but did

not deny the soft impeachment. It has a manorial sound. One could almost imagine himself an English country gentleman, untitled, but of ancient blood, while dating his letter from Pine Lodge. But the pines will not lodge. Their end is to be burned, and that swiftly. Thus passes away the glory of our name. We can not, by an appellative, constantly renew our unspeakable griefs. Hassan the Turk suggests that we re-christen ourselves The Pinery. That, he says, with grim jocularity, will never be a misnomer!

## IV.

## *THE WONDERS AND WISDOM OF CARPENTRY.*

This is an interesting world, whether you have helped re-make it, or whether you take it as it is. You live and live and live—so long that you can not remember a time that you were not alive. You learn the look of things, and the name of things, and you fancy you know the things themselves. But one day, some errand, perhaps some caprice, calls you. You open a gate which has stood in its place ever since the foundation of the world. It was a commonplace enough gate. It never elicited your curiosity—scarcely even your attention. If you thought of it at all, you thought only that it led into a pasture-ground beyond. But you open it, you pass through, and behold you are in a new world!

Then you perceive that hitherto the gate-way was no entrance, but a barricade. You saw only the outside and were content with a name.

From generation to generation, men have built, and repaired, and destroyed houses, but until you have done it yourself, carpentry is but a lost art, a voice, and nothing more. "Knowledge by suffering entereth," says the poet. Yes, and knowledge by doing, entereth also.

I suppose it will not be denied that change itself is pleasure. When a fit of weariness overtakes you, real

rest and refreshment are to be found in pushing the bureau back into the corner, wheeling the sofa up to the fire-place, and bearing the what-not over to the south-west. You bring the satisfaction of foreign travel into your own room. When you can change not only the furnishing of your apartment, but the apartment itself, when the spirit of diversion enters into your partitions, when your doors begin to slip around corners, and your stair-ways dance across the entry, and the entry strikes out into the world; when blank walls suddenly open fair outlooks upon field and sky, and pine-trees breathe welcome, and birds sing in the pines, and humming-birds hover over the honeysuckle where before the silence and stupidity of room-paper were wont to reign; life becomes new every morning, and fresh every evening.

You have a mind to "introduce water into the house." Our ancestors must have had a sort of hydrophobia. A house without water, is like a body without blood; but twelve miles from a lemon most houses are thus bloodless. People think themselves fortunate who have a well in the door-yard, and must bring their water painfully in hand-buckets. There is a notion that bath-rooms and water-pipes pertain only to cities, and must be sustained by corporations, and supplied by lakes, and appear in hose and hydrants, and quarterly bills.

But we, in a moment of inspiration, became convinced that a house may have water-works even if you have no river to turn on. We meditated a bath-room. It should be in the middle of the house for warmth in winter. But we had no middle-house to spare. There nev-

er is any room to spare. The only available spot is the back entry. Of course, then, there is but one thing to do —build on more house.

There you have the problem solved—central bath-room, and no space sacrificed.

It may be considered a cumbrous and costly solution, and in some cases it might be. But our land is good for nothing. The only crop you can raise on it is house.

Nature is stubborn, and will not yield to all our coaxings. Let us see if architecture is equally strong to prevail against us.

We thought it over and talked it over in twilight hours, and I fear we did not keep it wholly out of our minds on Sunday. In dreams our plans rounded out staunch and stately, but it did not seem possible that they would ever be any thing but plans—not even when a bevy of foreign workmen, rough and ragged, flocked across our grounds and thrust their spades into the greensward; scarcely more so when the trim and shrewd American workmen came in like a flood and bestrewed our hill with bricks and boards. But time went on, beams defined the cellar, rafters dropped into place, planks spanned abysses, chimneys sprang aloft, rooms and windows and door-ways began to develop themselves, and lo! our thought, our remote, shadowy, intangible, and then our exact and elaborate thought, stood out in wood and plaster, and brick and marble, before our very eyes!

I must admit that I felt a hearty enthusiasm for myself. "Is not this great Babylon which *I* have built?" This is not necessarily arrogance. It may be akin to

worship. To be sure, I had not lifted a finger. So much the more in our small human way had we followed His method whose

> "Eternal thought moves on
> His undisturbed affairs."

We had spoken, and it was done. We commanded, and it stands fast.

And yet the best part of the whole is that, thanks to the limitations of human nature, it was not done at our simple speaking. The doing was a process, and the process was a constant joy.

But people are awry. They have fallen into confusion as to what constitutes good and evil. "Well, I am sure it is a great job," they would say with a heavy sigh. And so it would have been had we lifted the beams, and sawed the boards, and driven the nails ourselves; but it is no job at all to sit in the sunshine and see other people hammering. And that is really all that building a house amounts to. The fact is that we are scared by imagination. Real things do not so much trouble us. It is phantoms of things evoked from our brains. It is no trouble at all to make a bath-room. The trouble is in the fancy of what bath-room building may be.

But the disorder of house-repairing! There it is again. The mischievous error that order is Heaven's first law, is the heresy of many otherwise excellent women. Order is not Heaven's first law. It is disorder. Order comes second. I have Pope against me, but Moses and the Prophets are on my side. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

"And the earth was without form and void."

Can disorder be more deftly expressed?

We speak of the turtle as if his tribe were the only one that carries its house on its head. But in fact we are but the turtle's elder brethren, and carry our houses on our heads and in our hearts as well. It is impossible to tell or even to know what a care a house is till you throw it off. The delight of having no "fall cleaning!" The happiness of seeing every thing at six's and seven's, and knowing that is just where it ought to be! All the closets are bestrewn upon tables, and nothing need be touched for six weeks! It is camping out in your own house. Away with tidiness, and punctuality, and regularity, and civilization! Come chaos, and freedom, living from hand to mouth, fleetness of foot, and no responsibility for any thing!

And by the time you are beginning to grow tired of it, and thinking of quiet and comfort—it is all over. Tranquillity returns of itself. The doors and windows have become stable, and you resume your routine with a heartiness and appreciation to which you had hitherto been a stranger.

Nothing in our houses becomes us like the leaving them sometimes to themselves. Order is no spontaneous generation, but is the fair daughter of a fairer mother, disorder. Thus we learn the proportions and relations of things.

Carpentry is next door to high art, if indeed it be not itself high art. Of mechanical work we often think lightly; any thing done mechanically seems to be done by rule and routine, without spirit or love. But the

mechanics of the carpenter implies a steadfast soul, a quick imagination, a keen eye, a fine, firm hand. The higher grade of carpentry we recognize as art, and call it architecture; and its designer an architect. The cathedrals and palaces of the Old World are pictures and poems in stones. Not only were inexhaustible patience and boundless wealth built into them, but it was genius that conceived them, and in the brain of the artist they had their first life.

The carpenter who builds your house is no Michael Angelo for a pope's patronage, and his name may never be heard beyond his own country. But he is also no dullard, blank of design as the wood on which he works. Somebody, or perhaps many bodies—many minds—have brought this modest household service to such a pass, that the skillful carpenter must be a man of mind. I suppose any dunce can drive a nail and saw a board, and if a man is content to be a hewer of wood all his life, and to live under authority, he can be a clumsy carpenter. But the master of his trade lays hold of mathematics, understands the science of proportion, foresees the statue in the marble.

Your new house, let us say, is to be built in the country, and fastened trig and firm to the old one. It is also not to look as if it were an after-thought, and patched on, but as if it grew there in the beginning. This is the problem. Thus it is solved:

The carpenter comes down from the city, browses around for an hour or two, up stairs, down stairs, and in my lady's chamber, with a two-foot rule, takes the next train home, and builds your house in New York! All

he does afterward is to bring it down and put it up. That is incredible, only that I have seen it done. Your house appears under the guise of loads of wood cut into numerous shapes and sizes, abounding in little grooves and niches for tongues to slip in, and little tongues to slip in them, and they all slip in! That is the marvel. Every thing fits into its place. There is no taking in of seams for the doors, or letting down of tucks for the windows. Every frame sits in the hole made for it, and every thing stays where it is put. Whatever was fore-ordained comes to pass.

Oh! but they take it all so easily. It is no work at all. It is a lazy life. I have sat in the sunshine and watched them for hours, and I know what I am talking about. They swing on a staging with an apronful of nails, and hammer leisurely through the bright October morning. They lift a beam on one end, and it falls of its own weight. They set a board upright, and then walk off and look at it. They never seem to be doing any thing in particular, only things somehow get done. I look at my neighbor Barbara, hurrying with might and main from wash-tub to well-curb, from well-curb to cooking-stove, from cooking-stove to ironing-board—all day long—all week, and month, and year long, and think how much harder a woman works than a man. Barbara seems always to be springing at the top of her strength. These carpenters seem scarcely to bring their strength into play, and I suppose for their happy-go-easy life they are paid ten times as much as poor Barbara for her eager and lavish outlay.

A blind man might see that the moral is that woman

ought not to work. It is the mission of man, and for him it is easy and lucrative. It is foreign to woman, and bruises her head, while she can only bruise its heel.

I have discovered, also, that one reason why men are so successful in the world is, that they are so lawless. Women are constantly hampered by little scruples of conscience, or propriety, or economy. A man seems to think that every thing was made for the purpose to which he chooses to turn it. I have no reason to suppose that my carpenters were not scrupulously honest, but if we had been in a state of declared warfare they could not have confiscated my property with more remorseless readiness. If they wanted any thing, they took it. Did they desire to mix mortar? they made a raid on the wash-tub. Depict the emotions of the female breast at seeing a range of tubs carried out of the cellar, knocked around the well, and bedaubed with mud! Think of finding your chopping-bowl under the garret-eaves doing duty as a nail-box. If a woman wanted a piece of cloth to protect water-pipes from abrasion, she would come and ask you for it. A man looks around and takes the first thing he lays his eyes on, unconscious and uncaring whether it is a passé dish-cloth or a silk gown. A woman is naturally economical, and before she puts any thing to a use not strictly germane to its purpose, she puts herself through a course of questioning as to whether she may not want it for something else more than she wants it for this, or whether something else of less value may not serve her equally well here. A man is naturally extravagant, and says: "After me the deluge." I must admit that there is a

certain charm in this recklessness. One gets tired of forever balancing exigencies, practicing economies, exercising prudence, and it is actually refreshing to see a being so made that he intrinsically does what he chooses, without stopping to consider whether it is the best thing to do. Men also are so much more accustomed than women to large outlay, large income, large dealing, that they are impatient of minor considerations, and never think of permitting any penny-wise prudence to stand in the way of their convenience or gratification. The Divine mind is the only one that can equally well grapple with outline and detail. Finite minds, if they would compass generals, must often consent to sacrifice particulars. There are some things in this life which we can dispense with, and some which are indispensable. They are wise who wisely discriminate, and do not lose the best in trying to hold all. There are women who never get on, because they do not know where to let go. They can do the sewing, the house-cleaning, the cooking, better than any woman they can hire; so they yield to the temptation and do it all, till they are broken in health, and spirits, and temper. They do not see that, though the hired help is a careless seamstress, an extravagant cook, and an untidy washer-woman, she would be a still worse home-maker; that, little as she contributes to the family comfort, she would contribute to the family happiness still less. It is not absolutely essential that the silver be polished every week, that all the carpets be beaten every fall. It is essential that health should be fine, and heart cheerful, and temper tranquil. Constituted as society is, women, to effect

this, must learn what things it will do to let go, and what must be held fast. If we could have all the housework done in its proper time and manner, it would be very charming; but what we must have is a bright, warm, wooing atmosphere in the home.

Thus I mused, sitting on the new garret stairs and observing that an antiquated but stocky beaver hat, from which I had mentally constructed a pair of moccasins, had been pressed into service by my brigands as a chisel, screw, and hammer-holder.

It is a serious objection to most useful occupations that they conflict with personal neatness. You can not sweep without becoming dusty, or cook without contracting grease spots. The farmer *must* grow dirty in his potato-field, and the engineer smutty on his engine. It may not be unwholesome, but it is certainly not attractive. It does not affect character, and is therefore not injurious; and what we should do if some persons were not willing to surmount their repugnance and till the soil and drive the engines for us, it is not easy to conjecture. Certainly, speaking after the manner of Sunday-schools, we ought to be very grateful to them; but I, for one, can blame nobody for not liking or choosing employments which soil clothes and faces and hands. Carpentry is free from all this. The artificer in wood may be as immaculate at the day's close as he was at its commencement. He works in a clean, sweet, fragrant substance, fresh and pure as the sunshine which gave it life. All the débris of his work are odorous chips, lithe and graceful shavings, sawdust—which is dust only by courtesy. As a result, it is not surpris-

ing that the carpenter is a man of gentleness, grace, and refinement — his voice is melodious, his language correct, his manners quiet, his disposition obliging. My carpenters kept house for me, as you may say, three months; yet so considerate, delicate, and intelligent were they, that their presence seemed not so much intrusive as protective and beneficent, and we felt quite forsaken when they packed their chests and rode off. It is rather pleasant and sociable to hear a little tapping on the wall, like a woodpecker pecking his hollow oak-tree, and when you look up, lo! a friendly face knocking through the partition. It is exhilarating to let in water on your new tank just to see if you can, and half-drown a man curled up in the bottom of it soldering something. Never did I by any chance hear or overhear a single profane, indecorous, or coarse word — only once, when the carpenters and plumbers, from their distant homes, were all ready to join forces, and a part of the important machinery had failed to come, and thus, of course, set their plans at naught. Then did I, through the closed blind and the open window, hear from the sweet-voiced, brown-haired, deep-eyed carpenter on the barn-steps the impatient ejaculation,

"Darn it all!"

But, under the circumstances, that was not very bad. Surely the accusing angel who flew up to Heaven's chancery with the oath blushed as he gave it in, and the recording angel, and so forth. "Darn it all." No doubt there are ruffled states of mind which this simple, somewhat inconsequent and inexplicable, yet vehement exclamation may serve to soothe; and if, hurting no

one, it does calm mental or nervous perturbation, it is not one of those idle words of which we must give account in the day of judgment, but a most useful and salubrious word, which shall smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

And carpenters are like Toodles's coffin, so handy to have in the house. They not only do what you bid them, but scores of things that you did not think of yourself. They see all the available little nooks for hooks and spaces for shelves, which, once up, you wonder how you ever got on without. They fasten little wheels to all your wells, till children cry for the privilege of drawing water. You go away in the morning leaving your cellar an uproar of rubbish. You return at night to find a place for every thing and every thing in its place. Shall I ever forget the gloom of a descent into that Avernus after a week's absence, when chill November's surly blasts made a furnace fire necessary, and there were only Anglo-Saxon hands to build it? No heavier lay Ætna on tortured Enceladus than lay the clinkers and ashes of that cold, uncompromising furnace on my soul. Shivering hands hold the feeble lamp, desperate hands grasp the huge iron wrench, and down comes—not the expected horrid fluff of ashes, but a cheerful, tiny curl of shaving! Ha! what is this? We gaze into each other's eyes! It can not be! We tear open the furnace door. It is! It is! Those angels have shaken out every relic of the late departed fire, have put in paper and shavings, and wood and coal, so that all we have to do is to touch a taper underneath, and immediately warmth and light, and heart and hope,

love and gratitude, human brotherhood, the unity of the race, and the solidarity of the peoples, are roaring through every pipe and funnel and chimney, till the whole house is aglow.

But you pay them for it. Of course you pay them for it, after a fashion. You hire them to do your work at so much a day or so much "a job." But they do not contract to give you beauty for ashes. Bartering the oil of joy for mourning is no part of the carpenter's trade. Your garment of praise will not be set down in the bill. And even before you reach their work of supererogation, the money you pay them is no equivalent for the service they render you. What you furnish them is a few soiled and flimsy rags, neither pleasant to the eye, nor good for food, nor to be desired to make one warm. What they furnish you is shelter, convenience, comfort, beauty, grace. Your bank-bills might lie in your purse till the world's end and you be none the better for them; but what the carpenters have done for you rests before your eyes new every morning, fresh every evening—a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

I hear it said sometimes that such a man is a great benefactor. He gives work to so many people. Not a bit of it—they give work to him. What he gives them is money. What they give him is woven cloths for raw cotton and wool—stately houses for unsightly heaps of brick and stone—winding ways, graveled paths, solid fences, fertile fields—form to substance, order out of chaos.

What keeps me in heart toward my carpenters is that my money, after all, represents to them precisely what

their work represents to me. The reason why the master-manufacturer, the large land holder, is not the hopeless beneficiary of his hired hands, is because the money which he pays does them the same good turn that their skill and industry do him. There is, strictly speaking, no call and no place for gratitude on either side. When my carpenter goes out of his line to build my fire, I am immeasurably thankful, but I am not thankful that he finishes my roofs and walls according to contract. At least I try hard not to be. That is his business. If I lend him an umbrella to go home in the rain, he may thank me—if he can—when it is blue cotton, and broken in the ribs, and torn at the top, and turns wrong side out on the slightest provocation; but he owes me no thanks for employing him. I did that for my own gratification, and he accepted the employment for his. All this seems very simple, yet there is much misapprehension. "I thank Mr. Smith for the work he has given me," I hear a laboring man say, "but I don't thank him for his money, for I have earned that." Why, then, you are not to thank him for the work. If you have really earned the money, you are quits. If he chose you because you were the best workman, or the most accessible, that is no occasion for gratitude. If he did it because you were poor, unable to get work, or to live without it, you may be thankful; but that is very seldom the case. Men usually employ the best workmen they can get, without making any draft upon benevolence.

On the other hand, says another, "I have worked for Mr. Smith all my life. I have been faithful, industri-

ous, and prompt;" as if that established some claim on Mr. Smith's gratitude. But has he not paid you with equal promptness and constancy? Did you work for him because you loved him? If somebody else would have secured you twice the pay for the same work, would you not have gone to somebody else? If you could have been sure that by setting up in business yourself you could have earned more money with no more labor, trouble, or risk, would you not have done it, quite regardless of Mr. Smith? It is true that Mr. Smith has used your muscle freely, and would have done very ill without it; and when he sets up to be your benefactor, I withstand him to the face, and tell him that he is no more your benefactor than he is your beneficiary. But you also have freely used his capital, sagacity, and credit, and have, in a commercial sense, no claim on him beyond what is mentioned in the bond.

"Ten years ago," says my friend the gas-pipe-maker, "a young man worked for me who never could have made a mechanic; but he found he could buy and sell, and he went into the business of selling leather. Report has it that he made ten thousand dollars last year. I don't believe that a single man that worked at making that leather made a thousand dollars. During the ten years I have worked steadily, adding to the wealth of the world, and haven't been able to accumulate a thousand dollars in all that time..... Skill in trading, in taking advantage of others, is the road to success."

This is undoubtedly a fair statement, except, perhaps, the implied identity of "trading and taking advantage of others;" but what then?

"Why, then," says my friend, intensifying his hardships by repetition, "I think I am as intelligent a man as he. I know that I have got as much education, and I know I am a first-rate workman at my trade; yet he makes ten thousand a year, and I with difficulty get a respectable living."

That may be, but whose fault is it? How shall we induce him to assume your difficulty and relinquish to you his income?

"There is no remedy," says my friend, with the energy of despair. "The Creator of the world when he made it established this law. The strong shall consume the weak, and the strong have been robbers and thieves from that time to this. The poor and weak don't like it, and I can see but one way of escape: that is, become strong themselves, become robbers and thieves, for that is what it amounts to."

Now here, under a rough shell, lies a kernel of truth, and of ultimate truth. Not by complaint, petition, or declamation can the weak escape the penalties of weakness, but by becoming strong. Strength is not plunder, but it is power. The weak are not necessarily victims, but they often are sufferers. Who is the robber when the trader gets ten thousand a year and the workman barely one? The young man confessedly could not be a mechanic, and could buy and sell. Was he wrong, or did he wrong any one, when he ceased trying to do what he could not do, and began doing what he could do? One man is as good a workman as another is a trader; but which demands the most or the highest skill? The workman works on dead matter, however

skillful he is—works by routine. The laws of wood and water, and metal and fire, are well known and unchangeable. The work to be done to-morrow is the same that was done yesterday. But the trader deals with what are to human vision uncertainties. He must look the world over. He makes ten thousand this year, but he may lose twenty thousand next year. The ambition of a foreign emperor, nay, the advent of a little caterpillar, may overthrow his plans and baffle his calculations. His mental faculties must be perpetually on the alert. A single error of judgment may precipitate fatal disaster. The workman may go on if he choose thinking of nothing, noting nothing, but the material that lies before him. Is it robbery, is it unjust, that the strain and stress of all the powers should receive a larger remuneration than the partial employment of a few? that the absorption of mental faculties should be counted a thing of far greater value than the occupation of physical faculties? When the trader loses ten thousand a year, does the workman complain that he loses nothing, or that his loss is as small as his profit in proportion to his employer's?

And, again, if the young trader makes ten thousand to the workman's one, why does not the workman turn trader? The trading thief or robber can not prevent him. If he choose to leave his bench and set up a counting-room, the world is all before him where to choose. The successful trader began on as small a capital as the unsuccessful workman. He has no power to force men to buy or sell. He may, of course, lie; doubtless he often does lie; but it is not an inherent part of

the business. Trading is not necessarily taking advantage of others, any more than it is taking advantage of yourself, unless it means that every thing ought to stay where it is forever. The trader may be just as much a benefactor as the workman. If a poor widow kills her cow, or loses it by accident, she is far better off to have the leather-dealer's money than she is to retain the cow's hide. He does not rob her by buying it. He does not even take advantage of her any more than he gives advantage to her. He may, owing to her ignorance, put her off with half price; but that is cheating, not trading. So the shoe-maker puts cheap leather in one shoe and good leather in the other; but that is not a part of shoe-making, it is cheating. When the leather-dealer sells his leather, he is not the benefactor or the beneficiary of his purchaser. In fact, I can not see why the leather-dealer is not adding as much to the wealth of the world as the leather-maker. Leather laid up on the shelf is not wealth; it is leather in circulation that is wealth. Take away leather-selling, and leather-making would quickly follow. Take away leather-sellers, and leather-makers would have a far harder time than they have now. It is because long trial has established the fact that, on the whole, it is better for producers to appoint some person to carry their produce to market than it is for each producer to leave his work and go to market himself, that these middle-men exist. It is because, on the whole, good middle-men are more rare than good workmen, that middle-men are paid so much more than workmen. That workmen do not ostensibly appoint traders, does not affect the case. The supply

of trade comes at the demand of work. One workman is just as free to leave his bench and turn trader as another. If he can not do it—if he does not like it, or does not feel able to succeed in it—it is no fault of the trader. It is a matter that lies between him and his Maker. A man may just as well complain of being robbed of his just rights because he has not the strength of a horse, the buoyancy of a bird, the swiftness of the wind, as because he has not the breadth of vision, the keenness of perception, the rapidity and correctness of judgment, necessary to constitute a successful trader. If these are to be compassed by his own efforts, it is his own fault that he has them not. If they depend upon the Creative Will, who is to blame for the deficiency?

In our country loose thinking upon matters of political economy has not yet been largely disastrous; but over the sea the battle is fought with blood and fire and vapor of smoke. My friend who talks of traders as robbers and thieves is apparently not far from the position of those Red Republicans of London who avowed to the world, one Easter Sunday, "that the accumulation of property was robbery, and that those who accumulated it were not only thieves, but murderers." My friend's reason is that himself, a good workman, makes but hardly a respectable living, while the trader—a man of no more intelligence or education than himself—makes a fortune. To this it may, indeed, be said, "You, if you could do what the trader does, would receive the same returns;" but there are so many points which ought to enter into the comparison that one must be chary in accepting his conclusions. The money which a man ac-

cumulates depends not only upon what he earns, but upon what he spends, and upon how he spends it. Two men will work side by side in the same shop upon equal wages. One buys cigars and wine, frequents balls and billiards, hires horses and carriages, procures fine clothes for himself and his family, takes frequent holidays, and finds himself at the end of ten years no richer than at the beginning. Another abstains from all sensual indulgence, finds amusement in the society of his family, carefully invests his small surplusage every month, and at the end of ten years, without speculation, or any means except industry and prudent investment, is the owner of ten thousand dollars, and has besides lived a life as happy, and reared a family as comfortable, as respectable, as well educated, as his neighbor who has spent his all. Of course sickness or inevitable disaster may make a man's effort unsuccessful, but that is not robbery or thieving; and I know—for I have seen it again and again—that a good workman, by steady adherence to his trade, by forethought, economy, and a wise disposition of his money, may not only earn a comfortable living, but may lay up resources for his old age, and leave a sufficient legacy to his children. Let me see how a man and his wife manage their earnings before I pronounce robbery and plunder to be the cause of their impecuniosity.

The self-denial, the rigid economy, the wise forethought, which many rich men practiced before they became rich, and which was a part of the system whereby they became rich, is more than many poor people practice all their lives. To walk when you can not ride is

not self-denial. Self-denial is to walk when you can ride, and thrift is to take the money for investment. Expenditure is not extravagance. The poor are often more extravagant than the rich. Improvidence does worse for the former than ostentation for the latter.

It is true that the intelligence of the workman may be greater than that of the trader. A man ignorant and almost stupid in literary, scientific, or æsthetic matters may be successful as a trader: but he is always skillful. He is keenly intelligent as to the state of the market, as to what will be a good object to take hold of, as to the comparative value of stocks; and it is this keenness, this special intelligence, which is so handsomely rewarded. If the workman will become similarly and equally intelligent, he, too, will be equally rewarded. But to stand with lowering brow and arms akimbo, and mutter "thief" and "robber," is neither here nor there. He may, like his brother of France, become a Red Republican, without the excuse which his brother of France can plead: but when he has accomplished his end, and property is redistributed, and trader and workman receive by law the same wage, it is a question whether he will, on the whole, find life easier.

"Cultivated people," continues my friend, "live on the industry of others. Cultivated people, you say, are what the country needs. We don't need them in this part of it, at any rate, for —— and vicinity are overflowing with them, and a more selfish or meaner class of people don't exist."

Practicing on this sound and salutary principle, it is to be hoped, good friend, you are doing all you can to

discountenance and annihilate this mean, selfish, idle class, and to strengthen and honor your country by preaching and practicing the gospel of non-cultivation. You must never go to church, for the clergy are notoriously mean, selfish, and cultivated, lazily lounging in wealth which they have extorted from the pains of their people, riotously living on the industry of others. You must never attend concerts, for the concert is made by persons who have cultivated their voices to the last degree by unintermitting indolence. You must hear no lectures, for the lecturer, unless he is a very poor one, never added so much as a gas-pipe to the world's wealth. You must not buy books or magazines or newspapers, illustrated or otherwise, for you are thereby countenancing the droning swarm of writers and artists who have drifted through college, and sauntered through apprenticeship, and have now fastened upon the hard-working mechanic, the pure and virtuous gas-piper, who has been really doing something for the world, and force him to the book-stall to buy a *Harper's Bazar* for ten cents, while they themselves do nothing but scratch a wooden block or make black marks on white paper, which nobody can eat, drink, or wear. You must not send your children to school, for you are thereby not only pampering those bloated aristocrats who live on the industry of others, the mean, cultivated, and selfish school-teachers, but you are directly re-enforcing their ranks by turning your own children into "cultivated people;" nor must you have them taught at home, for in so doing you will only change the place and keep the pain. You must denude your house of carpets and

curtains, and pictures and looking-glasses, and paint and paper, for they are all means of grace and "cultivation." Nay, I do not know on what principle you can retain your gas-pipes, for we can be just as healthy, and some say healthier, without them. People lived contented and died in peace before gas-pipes were thought of. They do not add to the world's wealth, except that mineral wrought into gas-pipes brings more money than mineral in the rough. But, just so, words wrought by those cultivated villains, the newspaper writers, into editorials, or by selfish, idle, cultivated novelists into stories, bring more money than words lying around loose in the dictionary; and it is what cultivated people have done that makes your gas-pipes worth while. When you have sent out of your house every thing which cultivated people have sent into it, you will have very little use for gas. Whether, then, we look at the amount of vital force you put in your work, at the actual necessity of your work to the world, or at the happiness which your work brings to the world, we see no reason why you, as well as the writer, the preacher, the orator, the singer, the trader, should not be reckoned in the ranks of those who live upon the industry of others. It is only when you have steadfastly set your face and your children's faces toward the huts, nuts, and nakedness of the noble savages from whom you descended, that you are living up to your principles, and advancing your country in the path of true glory.

When the relation between employer and employed is further complicated by a relation between man and woman, our confusion becomes worse confounded. It is

difficult to keep the mercantile and the sentimental separate.

One of our stock stories, to illustrate the wickedness of the existing relations between man and woman, tells of a young woman who sought employment in a store. The owner offered her a certain sum per week. "That," said she, "will just pay my board, but what shall I do for clothes?" He made an insulting reply. Such is the total depravity of male employers.

But why did the young woman lay herself open to insult? The man was a villain, but as long as she kept on proper ground he staid there too. When he had named his terms, it was for her to accept or decline, not to argue. It was no affair of his what she did with her money, or how she got her clothes. All that concerned him was the value to him of her services. When she began to consult him about her wardrobe, she at once abandoned commercial and assumed confidential relations with him, and, as he was a bad man, he answered her according to his badness. There is nothing to show that the cloven-foot revealed itself till she furnished the opportunity.

Men *are* worse than women. There can be little doubt of that; but sometimes I think their badness would be more smothered out of sight if women were more discreet — shall we say, more high-minded and unapproachable?

It is sincerely to be wished that the relations between employer and employed were more friendly; that each should see that their interests are not antagonistic. As men are not mere machines, but reasoning and emo-

tional animals, it is a pity that the fact should not be taken advantage of, and that those who are bound together by ties of business should not also be bound by hearty good-fellowship. But there is no basis for good-fellowship without a thorough understanding on both sides of the justice of the case. So long, however, as there is misapprehension, irritation, and ignorance, the most enlightened and the most noble should be the most patient and conciliatory. Not only Christianity, but national existence, seems to require this.

There are times when the east seems reddening with the dawn of the perfect day. Its coming sunshine stirs our hearts. The air is soft with its warmth, sweet with its balms, stimulating with its breezes. It is pleasant to live, it is easy to be tolerant; the whole earth is grateful. But gray grows the auroral sky — gather again the leaden clouds; and the sharp winds tell us, and the bare hills repeat, that the perfect day is yet far off; and no man can tell its coming.

If it were ever lawful or possible to be disheartened, one might be disheartened by a certain baleful exultation over the Chicago fire. Nothing ever more truly showed the brotherhood of man, the oneness of humanity, than the spontaneous uprising of the world to help the smitten city. But along with it all there was an evil portent. It was the undisguised rejoicing of some of the poor over the destruction and ruin. The first fire, they said, was the poor man's fire. This is the rich man's fire. Now we shall all be poor together. Let them see how good it is.

It is not the ignorance of political economy displayed

in this rejoicing—not the entire unconsciousness that the loss of the rich is doubly the loss of the poor, which makes it lamentable; but the class feeling revealed. It shows us that the poor are arrayed against the rich. They feel not that we are all citizens of one country, members of one family, but classes, hostile in purpose, divided in interest, antagonistic in sentiment.

It matters not how baseless such a feeling may be, though baseless it is to every right-minded person. Society could hardly exist in which the conditions of life should be more equal, more equitable than in ours. The obstacles presented by law, by government, to individual growth, are well nigh imperceptible. Personal freedom is practically unbounded. Nature alone prescribes limitations. A man is poor because he lacks ability to be rich, not because he lacks opportunity. A man is ignorant because he has not the desire or the will to learn, not because he has no chance to learn. A few are born to squalor and degradation; but it is the fault of their parents, not of national institutions. They are so in spite of, not in consequence of, law and custom. In our country the man of principle, industry, thrift, intelligence, skill, is morally certain to be successful in business and respected in society.

But that the class which rejoices over destruction is an unintelligent, unthrifty class, is not pertinent. The danger lies in the fact that such a class exists. It is no matter that their hostility is groundless. The point is to do away with the hostility. It behooves the rich, the well-to-do, the independent, not only to help the weak to be strong, but to inspire them with friendliness

while they are weak. The task is no easy one. The ignorant classes in our country are, I suppose, chiefly foreigners. Probably, of all the family servants in Chicago who turned upon their mistresses after the fire with impertinence and insubordination, not one was a native-born American. With these foreigners all the traditions of the past are so different from ours, the blood of their generations has made them so unlike us, that it is difficult to come into the circle of their sympathies. Difficult, but not impossible.

In this matter the wisest political economy is at one with the highest religious principle. Religion no more strenuously enjoins Christian brotherhood, than the safety of the State demands social brotherhood. Caste is not only unscriptural, but unsafe. He who throws down a single barrier between rich and poor, he who originates or cultivates between them sympathy of taste or feeling, serves the State no less than humanity. The good work is not to be wrought by sowing false principles and pleasing fancies. Law is inexorable. You may tell the suffering thousands of great cities that the accumulation of property is a crime; that the bequeathing of property is a monstrosity; that all property should be equally divided among the population once in seven years. You may send a ray of hope, a thrill of joy, into their heavy hearts; but the darkness will shut down again. For, first, your property is not going to be divided once in seven years; and, secondly, if it were, there would speedily be no property to be divided, and the last state of these people would be worse than the first. Yet there are men who are reckoned friends of the poor,

and held in honor by the poor, on no stronger grounds than this. With idle fancies they lure on their victims in the same evil path which has already led them into sore distress.

Yet there are many ways in which, without trenching on the great laws of social economy, a pleasant sentiment can be engendered, and real benefit conferred. In nature there is no grace. In revelation there is found room for grace. We are not of nature, but of grace. A great deal of our life is logic, but there is still something left for speculation. Prompt wages, contracts fulfilled, supply the demands of justice; but above and beyond this lies the beautiful domain of human sympathy and unity.

A waste of ungainly gravel, standing between two city buildings in the Lemonia, had been changed into a lovely garden-plot, bordered with turf, blooming with flowers. I watched it with delight for many days, never going past without receiving its smile of colors, its breath of spices. But one morning my garden-spot went back into the wilderness. A high board fence, impassable, impenetrable, shut me out from my lilies and roses—shut out, along with me, the old woman with the orange basket, the strawberry-man, the hand-organ bands, the school children, all the little and big barefoot boys and girls, all wanderers and wayfarers. I did not murmur. But who is the gainer? Do the roses open any wider, or are the buds any sweeter for their seclusion? True, the owner can come out among his odors and blossoms unseen of men, as he surely has the right to do. But woe is me for the scores of weary feet that

linger no more, and the wistful eyes that know not to complain. I bethink me of a rich man who built himself a stately house, and laid out spacious grounds, planting them with trees, adorning them with shrubbery, enlivening them with fountains; but by no hedge nor fence other than a slight and almost imperceptible boundary-line would he be circumscribed withal. "I don't *want* to be shut in," he would exclaim. "I want to look out upon the world, and I want the world to look in upon me. I want the workmen, going to their morning work, the shop-girls and the office-boys, to see my grass and my trees, my fountains playing and my birds singing. That is what I had them for." So the city goes thronging by, and the milliner and mantua-maker partake the dew and freshness of his morning; and all the people own the beautiful hill, without thought or care.

When the owner of the factory has paid wages to the men, women, and children whom he employs, his technical obligation to them ceases. Strictly speaking, they are mere working machines; he is an employing or paying machine. How they spend their time out of his mills is no affair of his. Whether they live comfortably, respectably, virtuously—whether they slave or starve—he has no responsibility. The employed has no right to look to the employer for any thing but the money which he agreed to pay.

The reason why a strict adherence to the letter of this law does not always work well in practice is that you never can count on men as machines. Calculations always fail unless men are reckoned as human, sensitive,

intellectual beings. Whether they be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, they are all tuned to the same key. The girl in the kitchen is very unlike her mistress in the parlor, but also very like her. Upon her presses the same hunger for society, for mental activity, for moral sympathy—the same love of beauty, the same affection for kindred, the same religious sentiment. As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man, and woman to woman.

It is ignorance of this fact, or misapprehension of its bearings, which goes far to prevent the kindly relations which should exist between employer and employed—between persons of a common nature and common interests. If the untutored Irishwoman who exults over the destruction of her mistress's house and property should see herself, in consequence, at once turned out of house and home, and reduced to beggary, she would exult no more. She would see that her mistress's loss was her own. Society has become so compact and complicated that the loss is too minutely subdivided to attract Bridget's notice; but it is none the less there, and is just as truly hers as if she bore the whole brunt of it on her broad shoulders. When the workman earns his two, three, and four dollars a day, and sees his proprietor gathering in his tens and perhaps thousands a year, it seems to him an unequal and impartial distribution of awards. If the workman could suddenly be set in the proprietor's place; if he could see by what painful steps the latter had toiled to his present elevation; if he could see what wide horizons had to be scanned, what multitudinous features comprehended, remembered, re-

produced; if he could feel the tumult of anxieties, the magnitude of issues, the perplexity of agencies, the bitterness of mistakes, the responsibility of losses, he would see that the carriages and carpets of the proprietor are but a very small part of his establishment. There is a reverse side.

It is impossible for the subordinate to see things as the principal sees them. If he could do so, he would be the principal. But he can certainly be made to feel that he is to his proprietor, as well as to himself, something more than a machine. There are factory masters who are not only the employers, but the personal friends of their operatives. Without trenching upon their independence or their personal dignity, the proprietor does occupy toward them something of the attitude of a patriarch, a sovereign. He provides commodious and tasteful dwelling-houses. He beautifies his grounds, and even his factories. He opens a reading-room and library, procures lecturers, visits schools, encourages concerts, tableaux, and dramas. His family live in no remote sphere, apart and unapproachable, but they, as well as he, dwell among their own people. They cast in their lot with the daily toilers. His wife and daughters know the community, their circumstances, their character, their children. Not with condescension, but with sympathy, they are always ready for advice, for aid, for the right word in the right place. There is on the other side no malice, no envy of superior position, for it is seen to be only a source and centre of grace. And of all that proprietor's investments in stocks and lands, in roads and ships, none, I venture to say, bring

him in larger returns of happiness than the money and time and thought he expends in enlarging and illustrating the lives of his workmen, over and above the wages he has contracted to pay them. It is not a hard duty. I might almost say it is no duty at all. It is a pleasure. It makes life agreeable and interesting every day.

And all the while it is doing this for the individuals immediately concerned, it is helping to solve the great problem of capital and labor; it is helping to heal the old feud between rich and poor. It is not only patriotic, but cosmopolitan work; for no nation is alone concerned, but the whole world.

So the unambitious and humble woman who makes of her maid-of-all-work a friend is not only securing good service, but is fighting her country's battles with weapons of peace. We hear in all directions the clash of the conflict. Workmen and workwomen are striking everywhere for higher wages and less work, with what success it is impossible to say. Because a class of mechanics wrest from their employers ten hours' wages for eight hours' work, they are by no means successful. Because an employer secures for two dollars work which is worth three, he has not necessarily come off conqueror. The laws of trade are as uncontrollable as the laws of the sea. If either employer or employed make an unnatural advantage in one direction, trade will restore the balance by a corresponding disadvantage in another place. Only the philosopher may discern the relation of cause and effect; but every shoemaker on his bench feels the effect, though he may call it by another name.

But he who has planted his fortune on the good-will of his people has built his house upon a rock. Fire and flood may rage around him, but he has property which neither fire nor flood can sweep away. It is not always an easy thing to overcome prejudice, to disarm hostility, even to convince of friendliness; but the work is good work, missionary work, whatever event attend it. It is a Christian service to be the benefactor of your rough, ignorant servant, even if she remain to her life's end unthankful and unholy. It is a good thing to provide opportunities for reading to a community of young men, even though they attribute it to nothing but self-interest on your part. I know no precept of the Bible that says, Do good to them that appreciate it, and benefit those who will thank you for it. But, as a general thing, such services are in a degree appreciated. Among our own American-born people they are intelligently and gratefully appreciated. A wise and generous man at the head of a manufacturing people holds a position which a prince might envy. Moreover, I suppose that to God is a man responsible not only for what he does, but for all that he might do. Not only for his achievements, but his opportunities, shall a man give account in the Day of Judgment. We are answerable for all those with whom we are brought in contact, and exactly in proportion to the closeness of the contact. Of this each must be his own judge. No rule can be laid down. It is only to feel human brotherhood.

I remember, in a gay company, an amusing story was told of a man, unfamiliar with the usages of society,

who mistook the finger-bowls for goblets. It was no violent or stupid error. There is nothing in the appearance of either to reveal its mission to the uninspired mind. But one gentleman, the gayest of the gay, exclaimed quickly and sincerely, "Oh! that was too bad; because some time he will find it out, and be extremely mortified."

The quickness of apprehension and generosity of feeling which enable you on the instant to "put yourself in his place" are the surest guides to wise and kindly action toward others. It is for the rich, the learned, the great, not to isolate themselves in their wealth, their enjoyment, even their cares; but to live an open and bountiful life; to hold themselves in harmony and sympathy with their kind; to soothe sensitiveness, and allay suspicion, and disarm hostility, even though all may be unreasonable; to disseminate light to the darkened and rest to the heavy-laden; to use their superiority, of whatever sort, for the emolument of the less favored, and not simply for their own upbuilding; to bring with their money and their power peace on earth, goodwill to men.

Nobody has a right to forbid the proprietor of real estate to erect a fence as high as Haman's gallows. He earned his money, or he inherited it; he, at least, owns it, and he shall appropriate it as he chooses. If he will to seclude himself from his kind, there is none to say him nay. This is logical; but, behind the logic, how came he by the qualities that accumulate fortune? He is thrifty, but whence came his thrift? He practiced wise and wide self-denial when his now poverty-stricken

neighbor was indulging in riotous and ruinous prodigality. But how came he by that lofty power of self-denial? Where did he get those eyes, which saw the end from the beginning? Whence those high traits—independence, self-reliance, moderation in all things, quick perception, ready judgment—which have made him a master among men, while his neighbor walks wavering and feeble, a servant of servants unto his brethren? These are questions which no man can answer. He inherited his characteristics from his ancestors, but did he choose his ancestors? A man carves his own fortunes, as he proudly asserts, but the fine eye for form and the clever hand for skill—these he did not make. At most, these he only trained. I do not say that, legally, he owes aught to his weaker brethren; but will he not gladly, as an instinctive thank-offering, bestow upon them as much as possible of all that his powers have brought him? He had somewhat—call it talent, genius, perseverance, self-control, sagacity—which enabled him to watch and work and wait, which has brought him at length fame and fortune. To bid him now divide his goods among the people is to lay the axe at the root of all healthy trees. But if he, thankful for his great endowments, and filled with love to his kind, shall long to have all men rejoice in his light; if he seek that his prosperity shall be the good luck of all; if he fervently desire that they shall share in his rewards who could not share in his toil; if his love shall wisely dispense what his wisdom concentrated; if his great question be, not how shall he segregate, but how communicate himself—why, then, I say, happy is

that man. He is a radiating centre of life and joy. He is rich, but he binds to himself the poor by indissoluble bonds. So far as he is known and comprehended, he is beloved. All his character and influence are given, unconsciously perhaps, but effectively, to the healing of the great feud between high and low. He does not waste time in sickly patronage, in sentimental charity, in namby-pamby attitudinizing; but is his hearty, honest, cheery self, and desires every man to be the same. He strengthens like the sun by his own free and natural shining. He strengthens not so much by supplying outward prop as inward power. It is not what he bestows in charity, but what he stimulates by sympathy and sustains by inspiration. It is not hard for this rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven. He is there already, for the kingdom of God is within him. And of such is that kingdom.

## V.

## *SCIENCE, PURE AND PRACTICAL.*

THERE is one class of men to whom every one seems inclined to give whatever they ask, and that is the men of pure science. Every one is aware that Professor Pierce stands at the head of all living *mathematici*. It is not necessary to know what he is up to. Probably not a dozen people in the world do know. But no one has any doubt that mathematics is a thoroughly innocent calling. You open his book which represents the last results that his science has yet reached, and you see a manuscript volume that looks very much like the ciphering-books which the boys and girls used to make in the village schools. You learn to your astonishment that the product of two factorially homogeneous expressions which does not vanish, is itself factorially homogeneous, and its faciend name is the same with that of its facient, while its facient name is the same with that of its faciend. You are, of course, startled by this assertion, but you are somewhat soothed at seeing it followed up only by common-looking "sums" in simple addition, agreeably diversified by the childish game of "tit-tat-tay," or an occasional inoffensive equation. As you turn leaf after leaf, and reflect that the President and all his Cabinet, that the General Court of Massachusetts, that not even Caleb Cushing knows enough

—I do not say to write such a book, but so much as to read it after it is written—you can only exclaim, *Allah il Allah!* The glory of a nation which can produce a man who can produce a book that nobody can read! Now, when such a man says to Congress, "I wish to ascertain what the results will be if $K^2=0$. Give me an appropriation for that purpose," all that Congress need reply is, "How large an appropriation?"

"Fifty thousand dollars," says my mathematician, for instance; and is he not worthy of it? When Professor Agassiz says, "In the centre of the South American wilderness, far up the Amazon, I suspect there is a fish an eighth of a millionth of an inch long, which I have never seen, and which, if he is the beast I take him to be, will fill the gap that yawns in my ichthyological chain; will you please send me thither in a squadron?" we would have him sent instantly, horse, foot, and dragoons. To be sure, most of us would not know that fish-bone from any plebeian trout's anatomy, and can not see in the least of what consequence it is whether $K^2$ equals O or not; but that is the beauty of it. In a country so bent as ours on material, tangible products, it is a wholesome corrective to have here and there a man who loves a fish for the fish's own sake, and not for its weight at the fish-flakes or its profits at the provision stores. We shall never pre-empt the North Pole if we find it, but it is pleasant to know that there is a North Pole. Commerce can serve itself very little of the North-west Passage, but much is gained when we have learned that we can not use it.

And, after all, the uselessness of scientific research is

but a pleasing dream. In fact, the results of science seem to be the basis of art. You may scorn Professor Agassiz's fishes, but they will be sure to rise up in judgment against you. You may give the cold shoulder to Professor Pierce's $K^2$ and O's, but it is an algebraical romance. Stars rise and set, suns fire and fade, according to those intlexible little letters. Of no consequence whether $K^2$ does or does not equal O! Why, if $K^2$ were greater than O, yonder madcap of a comet, that is content now to give us a frisky flirt with his tail, would let drive at us head first, and shoot through us like a bullet, sending the wounded earth staggering up against Mars, which, in its turn, would fall into Jupiter, which would at once break up the rings of Saturn, like any honest Internal Revenue Commissioner; or perhaps the earth would shatter into ten thousand little pocket earths, scampering around among the dignified planets like snow-flakes in a whirlwind; and then what becomes of your appropriation bills? No, my countrymen, unless you want the whole solar system to go to pieces, you will do well to give Professor Pierce, and all other wise men, ample room and verge enough to cipher out their O K's in peace and quietness.

They say that men of science have their little tiffs like men of nescience. It is difficult to believe it. Imagine the provocation that could cause hot blood over a factorially homogeneous idemfaciend, vanishing at that! Fancy a falling out between the jaw of an ichthyosaurus and the thigh-bone of a megatherium! And how unwise to let your angry passions rise over the proprietorship of any discovery, when your Great Falls hiero-

glyphs were photographed off a shingle in Philadelphia, and your Cardiff Giant was buried between two days! Surely science does not tend to petty disputations. She goes off on a false scent sometimes, but her search is always for truth. She deals with realities. She explores the eternal records. All things of to-day are flitting compared with the ages whose trace she seeks with untiring eye. Nothing is unimportant, for the little as well as the great has left its foot-prints in the rocks. The vestiges of creation are the patter of the rain-drops as well as the tread of leviathan. Selfishness and smallness are lost in this noble pursuit of the great, the vanished, the silent unknown.

And yet when Paul so heartily counsels Timothy to avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called, the unregenerate heart within us thrills responsive in spite of our loyalty to Professor Pierce. Remembering how much we have painfully learned, only to be required painfully to unlearn, what would be left, we dubiously ask, if out of our science should be taken all that which is falsely so called.

"Why does the bill hit upon ninety-five millions?" asked one Representative of his neighbor, when Congress was discussing a bill for the Extension of the Currency.

"I don't know," was the reply, "unless because the earth is ninety-five millions of miles from the sun—dollar a mile."

Is not a great deal of our scientific lore similarly valuable? The ocean, say the wise men, grows denser and denser the deeper you dive, till it upbears every burden,

and the lost ships and the dead men sink no more, but lie unresting on its unquiet bosom. And when you have assimilated and survived the horror of this awful sepulchre, another prophet arises, and proclaims and proves that as the ocean grows more dense, compressed are all things cast into its depths. So the ships go down to the bottom of the sea, and the dead men lie tranquilly in coral caverns and grottoes more beautiful than art can sculpture, and there He giveth his beloved sleep. Under the lead of the wise men, we have peopled all the whirling worlds. We have aimed at the moon with our telescopes—we have even measured out to the moon-men the size of the smallest tower we would condescend to look at, and have told them where to place it if they wish us to see it. And now, lo! the moon-men have the laugh on us, for, say the astronomers, they struck their tents ages ago as silently as Washington stole away from Long Island, and left only a scarred, sullen, deserted, irreparable ruin, which we have all this time been staring at as the happy home of our nearest neighbors!

But perhaps the astronomers of the next age will bring them back again!

In the warm and pleasant weather, lingering under the apple-trees, that have busily and cheerfully repaired the ravages of the canker-worm; lounging on the thick and verdant turf, which in mid-August is green with the greenness of June; watching between the leaves, scarce astir, the deep blue sky from which the swift, incessant lightning has burned every speck of vapor, every trace of impurity, we are easily won over to a fierce and sav-

age summer. But fierce and savage some summers are, though on this sunny noonday it roars us so gently that we forget how angrily storms may thunder along the months, rumbling, rattling, crashing, day and night.

Who can unfold the trouble in the skies? If a change is accomplishing in the surface of the sun, do the sun-dwellers know it? How much alteration can the spheres stand without suffering? We have been all our lifetime subject to bondage, through fear of the comets that were careering through the heavens; and now, it seems, we have been hit a thousand times, and never knew it! A saucy comet whisks its tail in our faces, and we do not so much as wince. It dashes head foremost against the steady-going earth, and we only say, "What a lovely haze of Helvellyn veils the hills to-day!" Nay, the poor comet, the wild water-sprite, the unsouled Undine of the skies, fails and falters and falls to pieces, and we feel no shudder. The comet that was expected does not appear, a few little meteors flash, a red-hot stone or two drops upon our globe—that is all we know. Have a thousand such comets fallen into the fiery envelope of the sun? Have any wandering worlds finally given up searching for their lost way, and dropped exhausted into the photosphere, adding to the flame that warms our world? Certainly something has stirred the solar fire. We know it, if the sun-folk are not aware. If that central orb be indeed the heaven of heavens, its happy denizens feel no disturbance. But even if it be, like ours, the residence of a race that is as yet in an early stage of development, perhaps they dwell securely on that black inner sun which peeps here and there through

the radiance, and which we call sun-spots. Does the photosphere turn to them its shady side, or are they so organized as to bask in the photosphere just as we do, only a little farther off? We love their sunshine ninety-five millions of miles away. Perhaps they take their sun-baths at arms-length.

But we may add in an aside, they must be more easily suited than we. For years that part of the heavenly system which is called New England has suffered from drought. When the celestial influences interfere with my butter-box, I know it. Long time the cry has been: "Can't make much butter this year. Pastures so dry, cows all dry up." Yesterday, in the drenching rain, came the familiar chant: "Can't make much butter this year" (I pricked up my ears). "So much wet, can't get no cream on the milk!"

Heave your magnificent and magnesian billows, oh! tumultuous and wrathful sun; fire us up to scorching point, cool us with sheets of rain, purify us with your lightnings, and deafen us with your thunders; but do not flatter yourself that you can conciliate a bold yeomanry, our country's pride. We have cut our eye-teeth, and are not to be cajoled by a thunder-shower. Nevertheless, I observe that, while the earth remaineth, whatever becomes of seed-time and harvest, whether the bow be set in the cloud or whether there's no rain left in heaven, so sure as Aurora scatters the humid shadows from the skies, and Saturday rises with the first Eons, so sure comes my butter, yellow and sweet and undiminished.

But the thunder-showers are terrific. If we were liv-

ing in Central America, we should expect lizards, and centipedes, and tornadoes, and all Central American ways and weathers. In the temperate zone we count on temperance, and have not schooled ourselves for such license of the heavens. A moderate and reasonable tempest, coming on a sultry afternoon, sending its compliments seasonably, and clearing into a splendid sunset and a starry evening—this we make up our minds to, and encounter with fortitude; but to have a cloud drop down plump on your apple-trees, stay there for hours, go pop, pop, pop, like a Brobdignagian pistol, the whole time, then disentangle itself, make as if it would sail away, and so lure you to sleep, only in an hour to be awakened by a rumble and a grumble, and find that rogue of a cloud back again in your apple-trees, pop, pop, popping his pistol, and setting your room alight with red-and-blue fire for a week at a time—why, that is another thing!

It is all very easy to take a spectroscope and tell what the universe is made of, which nobody can deny. You may speak great swelling words of progress, and expound the thunder-storms in sesquipedalian dialect, disturb the photosphere, and throw up oceans of magnesium around the sun, to account for our thermometer gone mad. You may announce as authoritatively as you please that the smallest spot on the sun is fifty billions of miles in diameter, or that Neptune consists chiefly of hydrocianic acid, and I can only make great eyes at you, and get my living by day's work all the same, while you go up and down in the newspapers for *a savant*, become an honorary member of all the learned

societies, and wag a tail to your name twenty letters long. But when it comes to practical availability, it is your turn to make great eyes. When leaving the stars and the gases, central fires and supreme ether, we descend into the region of human life and observation, *science* shows a frightful tendency to wabble. If she can not invent a lightning-rod strong enough to keep us from being thunderstruck, and if we are to have our houses burned over our heads in broad daylight by the unknown incendiaries of the spheres, what has she to boast of?

The main fact we all know. Lightning will follow the path of least resistance. It is a lazy fellow, for all its wild ways. It is no pioneer, and never goes off in a tangent unless obliged to do so. If, then, you will make for it a highway from the waters which are above the firmament to the waters which are under the firmament, you may reckon on its peaceful transit. But practically there are so many toll-gates on this turnpike that it amounts to a closed road. If the iron track stops short of the nether waters, you are but drawing the lightning on your own head. Nay, even a falling leaf, they tell us, lodged against the rod, will throw the electric train from the track, to scatter ruin through the house. So it stands:

1. A perfect lightning-rod is a perfect safeguard.

2. A perfect lightning-rod is next to an impossibility.

3. An imperfect lightning-rod invites the fluid. Oh! where shall rest be found?

In the meeting-house, says the man of science; but he is also a clergyman, and his testimony is without weight, because under bias. He says that churches are

never struck; and, when accused of "shop," explains that the spires act as conductors, and that high houses in thickly-settled cities are always exempt. I question his premises; but the world is wide, and I can not at this moment disprove his negative. I know there was once a village set on a rock, and the professor of science made allegation that it never had been, and never could, would, or should be thunderstruck, by reason of its position; and before the young summer was old, down came a thunder-bolt and shivered his theory to atoms.

Let the lightning play its fantastic tricks, says an ignorant but devout believer; we shall yet discover its secret. The world long suspected itself to be going round. It was left for our later days to prove it by the greater wear of the eastern rail on all railroads running north and south. As the earth is constantly whirling from west to east, of course it throws the train more heavily on the eastern rail, and Wisdom is justified of her children.

But meanwhile the unwearied lightning gleams on, just as fresh each day as if it were then flashing its first fury. And the violently fearsome betake themselves to feather-beds, and fall ill with irresistible terror; and the less affected lie on sofas, and try to read; and even the dreadnaughts sit quietly and count one, two, three between the flash and the report; and, just as you begin to think the worst is over, and Faint-heart ventures to leave the feather-bed and gaze wistfully from the window for light in the west, flash go the skies again, crack goes the pistol, and back darts the deer to her trusted covert.

I have a chimney which I would fain convert into a cistern, and I call in vain upon the learned, far and near, to answer me the simple question: How many cisterns of water can there be in a box as big as a brick chimney torn down? Response is none, for the question is a practical one. You can measure the sun, hit or miss. A few millions of miles, more or less, will never be detected; but if my water-works run dry, ruin and disgrace impend. You do well not to commit yourself.

So, as the farmer said to his boys, I will even try it myself. We boast of our educational facilities in America, nor need we fear the bigot's rule while near the church spire stands the school, and all that. I am an American citizen, and surely I ought to be able to cipher out a cistern with the bricks before me. I wanted it eight feet long, eight feet wide, and six feet deep. But then came a drought, and I deepened it two feet. Then, as the drought grew sore, I extended my cistern in my mind's eye, Horatio, two feet in all directions, and then the man came and said he made them round after the similitude of a pot. Very well. In our enlightened age and free country, we ought not to find it impossible to put a round man in a square place, and the problem was to make a round cistern big enough to hold ten feet long, ten feet wide, and ten feet deep. Come up, now, common schools, free institutions, manhood suffrage, and tell me how big it must be. I take down Greenleaf's arithmetic. Seventeen hundred and twenty-eight inches make one foot. Plain sailing. Is there any thing anywhere that tells how many gallons

to a foot? Yes, ale gallon, two hundred and eighty-two; wine gallon, two hundred and thirty-one. But my cistern is not to hold ale, and I am no Duke of Clarence to drown myself in Malmsey wine. What I want to know is how many gallons of water can I get into my round cistern ten feet square, and Greenleaf does not know; and as for making a globe out of a cube, Greenleaf stares at it precisely as Sam Weller stared at his father in the court-room—that is, he looks the other way. You would think he never heard of a cube or a globe.

The ages of hapless infancy that we have all lavished on arithmetic might well draw tears such as angels weep, and the very first time in my life that arithmetic had an opportunity to be of use to me, it all dropped apart. It is an ingenious enough science to torment innocent and helpless children with, but it can not build a cistern. I must toss my mathematics aside, lay off my garland and singing robes, go down meekly to my waiting workmen, and, instead of the scientific formula with which I had intended to awe them, say like a dullard, "Keep digging till you have made a hole big enough to put all the bricks in out of the chimney, which is a hundred and fifty years old, and large in proportion."

And I have a beautiful cistern, no thanks to science, but there is nobody in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, not even the men that made it, who can tell how large it is. With Universities, and Smithsonians, and Polytechnic Institutes in full blast, the only way to measure off your cis-

tern is to build a chimney, and then knock it down and count the bricks. And we prate of Science!

But Paul and I add under our breath, "Falsely so called."

I should like to know, too, if there is any person within the memory of men still living who has not supped full of the horrors resulting from using lead pipes. If we are to believe the books, Eve's apple was an innocent and harmless thing compared with a bit of lead pipe. Disease dwelt in the outer darkness till she was conducted into our world through a lead pipe. Science can not build me a cistern, but she can poison all the pleasure to be derived from it. Long ago we heard and received into devout and believing hearts all the searing stories, and rejoiced in our old-fashioned but wooden pump, and ascribed our vigor and health to pure, fresh water, till one day the pump was taken up to be mended, and lo, like Milton's Sin, it was no wooden pump at all, but only seemed wooden to the floor and fair, but ended foul, in a lead pipe!

So then, after ascertaining that in spite of years of poisoning we still lived, the old pump was thrown aside and a new one bought, with galvanized iron pipe, devised, commended, and recommended by wise men of the East as safe and salubrious. No rust could corrode it nor poison distill from it, and we drank that our souls might live. Now comes up Science again with a somersault, as cheery as if she had never missed the mark, and warns us if there is any one thing more deleterious and deadly than another it is galvanized iron, for whereas ordinarily the poison is an incident to the pipe,

this pipe sets to work with double forces to make poïson. Go to. We be all dead men.

"But oh!" mouths Science, with no accession of modesty, "we have discovered something altogether wonderful. Lead is fatal and galvanized iron deadly, but if you will fill lead pipes with the warm, concentrated solution of sulphide of sodium till it forms an insoluble sulphide of lead, they will be perfectly harmless."

They will, will they? For how long? By day after to-morrow you would set us all digging out the insoluble sulphide of lead as the arch-poison of the whole solar and human system. Away with your pipes and your poisons, and let us go back to the old oaken bucket that has no nonsense about it. I suppose one can swallow a rope if he likes and nobody hurt. Or will you tell us presently that the combination of the hempenate of oakum with the hydrogen of water forms a hyper-hempehydrate utterly destructive to the cerebral tissues, the cordic ganglia, and the body politic generally?

When Science knows her own mind, it will be time enough for her to dogmatize about our bodies. Until then, we of the Ignorami may as well rest assured that men have died and worms have eaten them, but not for lead, and cultivate the cheerful spirit of that incredulous mother in a certain rural Israel, who, when condoled with for a supposed liver complaint, replied heartily, "I don't know but my liver and my lights is both gone; but if they be I don't know it!"

## VI.

## *AMERICAN INVENTIONS.*

THERE lives a man, swollen with spiritual pride, who has traveled along my water-pipes deep down into the valley of humiliation. From the beginning he looked with the calm, exasperating eye of supercilious scorn upon plans and accomplishments. "Water-works are vanity and vexation of spirit," was the burden of his song. "A house with modern improvements is the Tantalus of civilization. You bought a bread-kneader once, and it took longer to clean the thing, after you had used it, than it did to knead and bake the bread."

"No, Hassan, I only looked at it and wanted to buy it, but did not, because you ridiculed it so."

"You will find that it will cost about as much, in care and money, to keep your hydraulics going as it will to keep a horse. There will always be something bursting, or something clogged, or something running over, or something giving out. You will have to watch it as closely as a two-year old baby; and your attempt to fetch water out of that rock into this house will be like running two miles to catch a horse to ride one. I am not surprised at your determination to ruin yourself, but I am surprised that you show no originality in the mode. You are simply ruining yourself, precisely as thousands have done before you."

"What a throng of many words, my friend Hassan, drunk with beer, hast thou spoken," says Beowulf, in the old Saxon poem.

But when the work was done, when this unhappy man was bidden to mark how wisely I had guarded against frost and famine, against surplus and check, how winsomely Undine was to be my nimble handmaiden, and how deftly fire and water had been pressed into my service—oh! then did not he hang back and seek to change the subject, and look over his shoulder for something to create a diversion? A man does so hate to give in! And when the sharp winter came upon us like a strong man armed, and I rose in the morning to find an icicle protruding from every little silver pipe, I confess I had misgivings myself; but assiduous nursing, with flannels and hot water, soon removed the difficulty, and care and sagacity prevented its recurrence; and Hassan the Turk is ready to gnaw his heart out with remorse, because nothing has occurred to justify his gloomy forebodings, or to make my system of irrigation any thing but an unmitigated and, after the first outlay, an inexpensive blessing. Let nobody be deterred from bringing water into his house by fears of failure and perplexity. You might just as well stop the circulation of blood in the body because it is subject to derangement, as to refuse the circulation of water in the house because now and then a pipe overflows, and your frescoes are ruined. Good workmen will prevent such accident; but if they can not, give up your frescoes; do not give up your life blood. When I see the farm houses, the dairies, the kitchens,

whose only source of supply is the well in the yard or the hogshead at the backdoor, and think how life would be lengthened and sweetened if all this heavy, and hard, and slow water-bringing could be supplanted by the turn of a screw, I wonder that we do not manage to introduce it somehow into our marriage contracts. What an increase of vital force would ensue; what a diminished demand for divorce; what a strengthening and upbuilding of the family band, if a girl should refuse to marry until there was an inexhaustible supply of water, at least in the kitchen. A house without water-works ought to be considered as incomplete as a house without doors, and as incomplete in the country as in the city.

It is said that women can not invent, even in matters that concern themselves. Not only the cotton-gin, but the sewing-machine is the device of the masculine brain. Man has to plan the very tools with which women does her work. Very likely. And after he has planned them, he ought to use them. The very fact that a man invented the flat-iron is *prima facie* evidence that he ought to do the ironing. "Labor," Mr. Wendell Phillips is reported to have said, "is entitled to all it creates;" let labor, then, run its own sewing-machines and turn its own mangles. Influence is greater than invention; and in influence women are as strong as men. Thus I admire the inventions of men on the *nil admirari* principle. It is a good thing for a man to do, but it does not bring him up to the level of a woman. Having invented all, he is but an unprofitable servant, and has not done half that which it is his duty to do. Still I

un glad he has done something. And when skill and ingenuity are united with modesty, they form a combination, and produce a result which the highest need not scorn.

"I have got something at home I should like to put up in your kitchen before your carpenters are through," said my friend the Churchman. I smiled benignly, not having the smallest premonition that I was entertaining an angel unawares. But it was even so. The "something" proved to be an apotheosized clothes-horse, "the Dryad," as it has been christened by Hassan the Turk. Every one knows the old-time clothes-horse that stood by the kitchen stove, cumbrous, and always in the way. The Dryad consists of three long poles, an assortment of wheels and pulleys, a cord and tassels, a porcelain knob, a gold ring, and a bracket or two. The greater part of it is at the ceiling. When it is not in use, it is all at the ceiling, except the knob, and ring, and cord, and tassels, which cheerfully ornament the window. When the clothes are ready to be placed upon it, the ring is slipped from the knob, and the Dryad glides gracefully down within reach. A little pull on the cords, and she glides gracefully back to her native skies, bearing her snowy blossoms. There they bloom on high till they are ready to be plucked for the bureau drawers, and in the warm air of those upper regions their dampness is won away or ever you are aware, and they can be removed so speedily that there is small chance of spot, or stain, or smoke; nor can the frisking kitten, by never so great leaps, pull the clear-starched muslins, for playthings, to the floor; nor do

your Turks ever run against them in the dark; and moreover, it is always there ready to your hand. As its value gradually dawned upon me, I wondered I had never seen one before, and that all the kitchens of the world were not supplied with what no gentleman's library should be without. While I was musing, the fire burned, and I summoned the Churchman, and asked him,

"Where did you get that Dryad?"

Why, it was one he had at home.

"But where did you get it? Where did you buy it? Who made it? Where does the sun arise on such another?"

Well, the man hesitated, and coughed, and finally owned to having invented it himself!

The trouble with my town is its modesty. We are brimful of talent, but we hide it under a bushel. Governors come down here, and by quietly using their eyes, learn how to govern. The world has hitherto dragged its stones on a drag. We elevate our drag, depending it from a pair of old wheels in front, and resting it on trucks behind, and save great stores of power; but we do not say any thing about it. We simply do it, and men who have been parading their scientific mechanics all their life look at us and are astonished. When our fellow-countrymen entreat us to serve them in public offices, we leave our Happy Valley, take up the cross and go, but we do not run around electioneering. When a new-comer, unaware of our delicacies and dignities, and eager to secure us for the country, and perhaps, also, to evince his own zeal and friendliness, once

brought down from the great city its city ways, and posted at night, by the moon's pale beams, a score of gigantic handbills, and under the rising sun all the trees blossomed in frantic adjurations—

"VOTE FOR MR. BBOWN
For Secretary of State;
VOTE FOR MR. JONES
For Secretary of the Treasury,"

the consternation of Messrs. Brown and Jones was extreme. *Ask* people to vote for us! Never! We will be the people's spontâneous choice, or we will not be the people's at all! and down came the offending handbills from the unconscious trees as swiftly and as stealthily as if they had been the proofs of a forgery. We thank you for your friendliness, sweet friends, but do not compromise our dignity.

And here comes another genius, cheating the world by his miserable modesty. He has devised a machine which every one admires, but he has no agent, never advertises it, takes no measure whatever to introduce it to a waiting world. If I insist upon having one for a friend, he thinks there is a man in Boston who had one in his shop some years ago, and he may have it on hand yet. The man in Boston blithely brings out various machines, from a clothes-line to a hat-rack, and pronounces each one, successively, to be the Dryad. He does not even remember how the creature looks, but is ready to take oath to any thing for the sake of selling off his stock. But, happily, I have seen a Dryad, and can not be deceived into accepting a dust-brush. The

Churchman, under strong pressure, finally thinks he may have separate pieces enough in his barn to construct a whole machine, so I succeed in exporting one; and the family are so pleased with it that they are currently reported to hang the cat and kittens on it when they have been out in the rain. But an ordinary person, with such an invention, would make a fortune, build houses, be elected mayor of the metropolis, and become a candidate for States' Prison in six months.

In building a house, in founding a home, there are two things wherein it is not well to economize—light and heat. It is not how little you can be comfortable with, but how much you can secure. You may argue that you occupy but one or two rooms, and these alone need be lighted. But immediately you want a book, a picture, a bit of work that is in some dark and distant apartment, and the genial current of your soul is frozen. He who reasons is lost. There is no safety but in having your whole house alight and aglow. The evening radiance shall be as pervading as the broad and lavish sunshine. It has its own charm. Under its mild and mellow spell you feel yourself a point of light in a dark world—a tiny, fixed star, self-luminous and illuminating. The faces on the wall grow more benign and sympathetic. They are no longer pictures, but souls, astir with love and memory. All familiar colors of the day blend deep and rich in the new lights and shadows. Even hard outlines soften into grace. Friendliness becomes more suave and free. There is a breath of dreamland in the air, and far off and impossible things become near and real. Is it only gas, after all?

But in the country we have spermaceti and kerosene for all our inspiration; yet we ask not your pity, oh friend from the city; for while we recognize the ease and convenience of your gaseous inventions, we recognize also their disadvantages—disadvantage of leaky pipes, and noxious smells, and tainted air; of failures and sudden darkness, and flare of gas-jets most trying to mortal eyes. We look at the bright and steady gleam of our honest, if cumbrous lamps, and thank Heaven that the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places.

The fame of the German Student Lamp was noised abroad through the rural districts till the unsophisticated mind could but infer that it was, on the whole, rather an improvement on the sun, cheaper and more congenial to the eye. Whereupon the unsophisticated mind arose and went to the city on a tour of investigation, and discovered that inexhaustible American genius had gilded the refined gold and painted the lily by an invention of its own, called the American Student Lamp. The German was good, but the American was better. It was lacquer-work, and would never tarnish. It was various other things that would never become apples of Sodom in your grasp. Could the unsophisticated mind hesitate? Between German and American, can the patriot's choice be doubtful? We are not on Tremont Row or Dock Square; we are on Winter Street, that rendezvous of respectability and reliability. Cæsar is above suspicion, and his wife never appears behind the counter. We buy the American lamp; we are furnished with a pamphlet library of literature bearing on

its mechanism and manipulation. We go home and prepare to illuminate.

We have come to the conclusion that a complete mastery of the American Student Lamp is equal to a four years' course of study at the Institute of Technology. We have been diligently investigating it for eighteen months, with short and infrequent vacations, and have apparently come no nearer the secret place where its soul abideth than we were at the beginning. It is spherical trigonometry carried to the highest power, and then merged in total depravity. It is a combination of globes and chimneys and cylinders and cork-screws, appalling to the natural man. It is one of those things that no fellow can find out. There is a siphon and a tank, and a respirator, and an aqueduct, and a series of tubes more incomprehensible than the wheel in the middle of a wheel which the prophet saw in a vision, and, like that, they turned not when they went, and, unlike that, they went not when they turned. It is a' a muddle. The only way to tell when the lamp is full is to pour till it runs over. The entire Faculty of one of our best colleges have been engaged, from time to time, in putting in the wick, and the clergy have done every thing but pray over it. In vain. We took the lamp and the family, and went to town. The lamp was set on the counter, the family stationed around it, the proprietor summoned and bidden to "put that wick into that lamp." His knees smote together, but he said he would. It was just as easy, he said. Just slip the wick on this cylinder and wind a silk thread around it, so; and then slip the silk thread and wick

and cylinder into another cylinder, so; and there was a hook in this cylinder and a groove in that one, so; and the hook would catch, and the projection would go into the groove, so; and every thing would move spirally and smoothly, so—only the wick would not go into the cylinder, and the projection would not go into the groove, and the hook would not catch, and things would not move at all, and the man's fingers trembled, and he wound and unwound, and screwed and unscrewed, and jammed and pulled with nervous haste, while we stood around gazing in grim silence. Nemesis had her turn. By-and-by the wick really seemed to go where it belonged. At least it did not go anywhere else, and the unhappy man took out his bandanna and wiped the beaded agony from his brow; but not even the torture he had undergone could extort from him the confession that there was any other or more scientific way of putting on the wick than the one he had just exhibited. It was as direct as the Chinese way of roasting pig by burning the sty; but we were forced to be content, and went home rejoicing that life might be pleasant while that wick lasted, which he said would be six weeks or two months.

It is now eighteen months, and the wick has never been changed. There is no reason why it ever should be. Who buys the American Student Lamp may be sure not to waste his substance in wicks, for there is no process known to natural history by which the lamp can be made to burn. You might as well have an American student in the room for all the light you get. We called friends and neighbors to rejoice with us in

this new flame, and when it was finally kindled we went into the street to see the illumination, and the lamp was out before we were. We had meant to gratify our vanity with the splendor of the spectacle, and it was necessary to fetch a candle to find where the spectacle was.

> "And while the lamp holds out to burn,
> The vilest sinner may return,"

gives no hope to us. It is but a delusive way of saying that he shall never return. We appealed to the seller. He exchanged it, but change of lamp is not change of mind; and still from those flames no light, but rather darkness, visible. He proffered still further exchange; but where is the use of a stream of lamps going and coming from the shopman's counter to a country house like a chain-pump? We appealed to the manufacturer, whose name purported to be Carleton. But there was no response. I do not believe Mr. Carleton made it. I do not believe there is any Mr. Carleton. The Prince of Darkness invented this lamp of his own free-will, to entangle the souls of men, and a respectable New England firm is ready to abet him.

Then the lamp began to leak, and the library table was ruined. Then we found it was not a fatuitous, but a fore-ordained leak. An aqueduct is diabolically contrived to lead the oil from the globe where it is supposed to burn, but will not, into a tank beneath, where it can not do any thing but drip upon the table. If time be taken by the forelock, this submarine tank can be unscrewed and emptied; but as contemporary history had failed to make mention of this feature of the ma-

chine, the tank had overflowed, and scattered evil odors, discoloration, and ruin. As, however, even if the lamp does not burn, all the oil will, after a while, leak out, this little peculiarity presently ceases to be troublesome.

We love the American Student Lamp. If any person is fired with a desire to let his light shine in adversity, we have an adversity ready to his hand. Whoever wants a lamp of excellent manufacture of the highest price, bright and burnished, and warranted not to burn, may be safely recommended to the American Student Lamp. As a safety-lamp it is unparalleled. Nothing short of nitro-glycerine could make it explode. As a testimonial of affection, it is more economical than the Ball and Black cases which inclose dollar jewelry for wedding presents. At every Christmas and birthday festival we make somebody a present of that lamp. It has been carried to donation-parties. It has figured at Calico Balls. It has been sent to the Chicago sufferers. It has just not been dropped into the contribution-box. And still,

> "In that house of misery,
> A Lady with a Lamp I see
> Pass through the glimmering gloom,
> And flit from room to room."

Finally, we sent it back to the seller. He notified us that it stood on his counter burning all day. We never tried it in the day-time. As a general thing, the rural districts want lamps that burn at night. For the day and the counter, doubtless the American Student Lamp is invaluable; but for the evening and the home, we

have gone back to candles and the ancient lamp, and the broad, benignant moon, as

"Full she flared it, lamping Sammiata."

Sitting in the twilight, we muse over the shortcomings of our country, and lament the hurry, the superficiality, the lack of thoroughness, the high-sounding pretensions, the small and mean achievements which disfigure our life.

"We pride ourselves upon our ingenuity," says one, "and we devise many things. But you can depend upon nothing. Shop-keepers mock at women for preferring English and French goods to those of American manufacture, and call it fashion and snobbery, and tell tales of foreign labels on American goods, and American women satisfied in consequence. But the truth is, the foreign fabrics are of better quality than our home products. Patriotic people will even pay a higher price for an American lamp than a German lamp, but patriotism itself would not be willing to spend the remainder of its natural life in darkness for the sake of encouraging home manufacture. The Germans are a slow, heavy, plodding race, and perhaps do not turn out so many lamps a day as we. But when their lamps are turned out, they burn."

"But it so happens," says Hassan the Turk, "that many of the so-called German lamps are made in America. What then?"

"Probably they are the German lamps that catch fire and are thrown into the street. I have known of such. Probably they are the lamps that explode and kill their owners. I have read of such."

"But what have you to offer in proof that exploding lamps are of American manufacture, and the non-exploding of foreign?"

"Nothing except our American silks, which look so stout and wear so shabby, and spot with water."

"But when you buy a foreign silk you take your life in your hands. It may be rep and lustrous and stocky, yet break and be nearly worthless. It is only of free grace that you get even a good Bonnet silk."

"And the Chicago pig" I bethink me with apparent inconsequence but real logical connection. Chicago having burned up the greater part of her confident boasting, had nothing to show the Grand Duke but her way of killing pigs. Alexis watched the process, so they say, with the imperturbability which doth hedge a king. At its conclusion, instead of going into raptures over the growth of Chicago and the great American Republic, he quietly asked, "Can you take a live hog and turn him into sausage in ten minutes?"

"No, we don't think we can do that," said smiling Chicago, falling blandly into the royal trap.

"They do in Copenhagen," said his Imperial Highness, the Grand Duke Alexis.

Poor Chicago! To be burned by fire and snubbed by princes! She has six thousand new, first-class houses, four thousand begun, and two thousand under contract; but what doth it avail her so long as this Mordecai sitteth at the king's gate making sausages faster than she? Poor pig-packing Chicago, to have even her crown of pork plucked from her scorched young brow! No doubt, as she thinks of the stalwart duke, she swears

eternal hate to monarchical institutions, and wishes that many more might

"Sleep
Full many a fathom deep,
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!"

With the morning light came once a dreadful revelation. The dining-room carpet, the new Brussels carpet that had had but two days' wear and one gentle sweeping, was developing little groups of scars, little tufts of wool, little outbursts of rags, as if some one had taken a pair of scissors and pulled up the threads, or as if rough hob-nailed boots had trodden and torn it. We watched and waited in consternation two days, and the little constellation thickened, till the firmament of our floor was studded with these baleful stars.

"Moths!" said the white lips of dismay, and we wrote at once to the sellers.

Those carpet-knights made answer that it could not be moths, and must be hob-nailed boots, or the playful gambols of lap-dogs or sharp-clawed kittens. Vain conjecture, when there were neither dogs, cats, nor hob-nailed men about the house. We summoned workmen cunning in carpets. They said the little ruffled rags and raveled yarn-ends were owing to a defect in the manufacture; that it was called "sprouting;" that carpets were sometimes thus defective, but that no manufacturer of repute would ever let such carpets go into the market.

"You may depend upon it," said a loving but mistrustful patriot, "that carpet never saw an English

loom. It is the work of some shoddy American manufacturer, palmed off upon us for English. He shall be brought to grief. I will inquire of the sellers the name of the English manufacturers. You will see that they will evade, and will not give it."

Prompt as the morning came the answer, "Humphreys, Kidderminster, England!"

"That looks like business," said Hassan the Turk.

But we determined to go to the root of the matter. A protocol was immediately prepared for these dishonored subjects of her majesty.

"We regret to be obliged to say," was the language of the joint High Commissioners, "that, much as we love our country, we are not surprised at any imperfection in her manufactures, but we did think that *English* was a synonym for *thorough*. In our circle, when we have procured English goods, we account ourselves to have acquired the best of its kind. But if England gives out, where shall patience look for perfect work? What is the good of your not fighting Prussia if you are going to send shabby, shoddy carpets into the little rural dining-rooms of America? What is the use of earls and lords sailing around the world to settle Alabama claims, if the great manufacturers persist in sowing the seeds of discord under our feet? Messrs. Merchants offer to exchange our carpet, but how shall we know that another carpet will not also develop vegetarian tendencies? And what shall compensate us for the trouble, perplexity, and general disturbance of our household gods, to say nothing of our broken faith in English fabric? Be sure your sprouting car-

pets will grow a more fatal harvest than the dragon's teeth!"

The most casual reader will see that there is a high moral tone about this appeal calculated to strike the woolen mind with awe. Humphreys, Kidderminster, were evidently impressed. They replied that they would come over in November and look into it. In November they reported themselves in Boston. Did they expect a free American citizen to put his carpet in his pocket and go to Boston? Because he did not, they slipped back to Kidderminster. Justice was not to be thus baffled, and again stretched her hand across the briny deep, collared Humphreys, Kidderminster, and bade them rise and explain! They made some lame excuse, and said they would come again in July and thoroughly investigate. Perhaps they will; but meanwhile it remains that an old English house of established reputation sends into the market, and is not careful to reclaim, goods that would do discredit to the "smartest" and swiftest and shoddiest firm in America. Why, then, should we monopolize a reputation for unsubstantial fabrics? We are a country of magnificent distances, and comparatively small and sparse population. Our haste and superficiality are born not of our character, but of our necessities. True, that way danger lies, but the encouraging symptom is that we bear our standard high. We are gradually learning to do well what at first we felt compelled to do quickly. The Cheneys are never content with a piece of silk, but are ever meditating on the next, and give the mulberry-worm no rest. Doubtless, the whole pork-compelling

mind of Chicago, since the visit of his Imperial Highness, has been directed to facilitating, by a few moments, the transmigrations of the hog. We drive along the white, hard roads between the hedge-rows of England, and think of the rough and rugged cart-tracks, slimy, muddy, dusty, and dented with treacherous pits, that are sometimes a bond and sometimes a barrier between our own towns; but our roads are already abreast with our other victories. It is no small thing to establish even an imperfect connection between the shores of a continent. It would be Quixotic and extravagant, it would be frivolous and pottering, to attempt to unite our remote cities, our straggling villages, by such highways as England can not afford to miss. When wealth and leisure and social life have reached a certain point, they overflow in Central Park drives and suburban Boston roads that match the finish of merrie England. But England herself would be but a Central Park set down in the midst of our vast American territory.

In small things and great, the same good word can be spoken. The gay-flowering cretonnes which adorn our rooms and disfigure their occupants have an honorable tale to tell of American ambition. Some native genius, we were told, was experimenting, but refused to put any goods upon the market until he had wrested the secret of skill, and satisfied himself of their excellence. Suddenly cretonnes which had been procurable only at a dollar and twenty-five cents were abundant in graceful figures and soft, agreeable colors for seventy-five and eighty-seven cents, and we knew our American genius had succeeded. Look at California blank-

ets, heavy yet light, worth almost their weight in gold, white and fine and fleecy like the clouds, pure as the driven snow, and imprisoning the very soul of warmth, and know that, though America has yet much to learn, and though the noble mind counts nothing done while any thing remains undone, still we have a country which, even in its manufactures, needeth not to be ashamed.

VII.

## THE PLEASURES OF POVERTY.

One of the most gratifying developments of modern science is the possibilities of poverty. Mind, I say the possibilities, not the possibility of poverty. The world has always known that it might be poor, but it was reserved for our own day to learn how much it could be and do and enjoy in poverty. Science has investigated so loyally, art has showed itself so democratic, that it really seems to make little difference nowadays whether you are rich or poor. It is only a choice of effects where all effects are pleasing. If you are rich, you finish your room with polished woods, much inlaid work, frescoing, and gilding. You pile heavy carpets on your floors, hang heavy curtains at your windows, lead in the sunshine through wondrous films of gossamer, forget your walls in the pictured pride and beauty and bravery of the Old World, and fill your rooms with memories of palaces, with devices of genius, with the luxuries of all lands. The effect is soothing, sensuous, delightful. The confusion and clamor of our manifold activities are hushed into a harmonious lullaby. Life is a dream, a reminiscence, a prophecy, an ecstasy.

But you are poor. Yes, and sarcenet and muslin and straw matting have their victories no less renowned than plush. Heaviness, solidity, majesty come with

money, but lightness, airiness, grace come without it. Sunshine itself will almost furnish a house, and there is a mental exhilaration in the conversion of an old muslin gown into a new toilet-table which hired upholstery can never confer. This domestic transmigration of souls gives a sort of creative consciousness which is akin—though perhaps remotely—to the artistic sense. You will never make a picture, but out of four walls and a few rags, boards, and pennies, you have made a home light, cheerful, gay. It does not lure you to repose—no; but it tones you to action. It wiles you into no dream of past grandeur, but it rouses you to performance and achievement. It thrills you with the eagerness of spring-time and the promise of summer.

Nor is poverty hopeless even of pictures. "The first thing to do," says my art-critic, "if you would cultivate a love of true art, is to throw your chromos out of the window." Throw your own chromos out if you like, but lay a finger on mine at your peril! The art-critic is a useful and superior person. Let us not despise him from the heights of our ignorance and self-satisfaction. We will study art assiduously; and when we have become so fine and discriminating that our chromos give us no pleasure, we will dispense with them, but we will not do so at any men's dictum, since how can we learn art by staring at a blank wall?

In the city, neighbor to right of me who struck oil, neighbor to left of me who had an army contract, neighbor in front of me who plumbed the new court-house, have

> "Kitchen, parlor, dining-room,
> And chamber all complete"

in butternut and oak and satin-wood and walnut, black, French, and American, polished, varied, and admirable, while I have only feathered my country nest with white pine. It is a cheap and common substance, says Midas, who uprooted all his ancestral pines for these richer and costlier woods, and bids me do the same. Never! What was good enough for my fathers is good enough for me. I will not destroy the moldings and the wainscots and the cornices which they set with painstaking and fidelity. The same walls shall echo back my voice that echoed theirs. But here comes the painter to the rescue, with his art that is only not high art, and, instead of the cold and somewhat monotonous whiteness, fills my atmosphere with his lovely tints and shades. The soft brown and gold, and the shimmering haze of October, make a perpetual Indian summer in my autumn room. I do not wish to say any thing derogatory to nature, but it certainly seems to me that the black walnut of man's device is prettier than nature's own handiwork. I look at the two side by side, and my painter's is surely finer, deeper, more wavy and graceful. "Graining!" exclaims my neighbor the plumber, and his master the artist, and all is over with me. Graining is to them an abomination, an imitation, a cheat. It is trying to palm off painted pine for a costlier wood. It is nothing of the sort. It is loving nature so truly that you seek to reproduce her traits where you are forbidden to introduce herself. I can not command the fabric of oak, but I so love the stately tree that I will copy as well as I can in pine his exquisite soft tints and clouded shells and billowy lines. What saith the Scrip-

tures? "And the Lord said unto Moses, they shall make an ark of shittim-wood, and thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and thou shalt make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. Thou shalt also make a table of shittim-wood, and thou shalt overlay it with pure gold." Graining is only this, and nothing more. Why must we be wise above what is written? When I look at my painters, when I see how skillfully they have devised instruments wherewithal to imitate the results, while absolutely shut off from the processes of nature, I think them, indeed, but little lower than the angels. Looking at man with all his limitations, it seems more wonderful that he should imitate black walnut so successfully, than that his Creator should be able to make it in the first place. That is, it appears to require less creative ingenuity to make fine wood at first-hand than to make a man capable of making something that looks so much like it. Sham indeed! The whole question of Divine Sovereignty and Man's Free Agency rises before me when I look at my grained and glorified doors.

Sham and cant are hard words, and mean hard things; but there is sometimes as much cant in the denunciation of cant, and as much sham in the avoidance of sham, as in the cultivation of both. My plumber's wainscots are real walnut, and mine are simulated; but my delight in my shams is more real than his in his truths. I love their beauty, their flowing lines, their soft graduations of color. He loves them for their costliness, for the tribute they pay his pride. How do I

know? A little, because he did not select with his own eye, but gave orders for the handsomest and highest—which is not love's way; a good deal, also, because he walks through his beautiful rooms, not admiring, not kindly and mellow and hospitable, but arrogant and ostentatious, rude to wife, cold to children, tyrannical to dependents, unjust to tradesmen. His carved mantel is real, but his cheap pine soul is not even grained.

My lovely neighbor over the way will hang no picture on her walls because she can not yet afford oil-paintings, and she calls that being thorough-bred. She looks at her rich carpets, her cumbrous chairs, her smooth, bare walls finished to the last degree of art, and joyfully reflects that no engraving, no chromo, no cheap adornment of any kind disfigures her splendid drawing-room. She is quite frank in avowing her limitations. So far as it goes, every thing is what it pretends to be.

But, dear madam, the greatest pretense of all sits at this moment presiding over this room. The pretense is in a pair of eyes dark under their drooping lids, in the broad high forehead and shining hair, and sensitive mouth and gracious smile, and languid, reposeful attitude. All sensibility and susceptibility are there, romance and passion, delight in beautiful forms and sweet sounds, if those features speak the truth. But I am chagrined to find that a flaming circus "poster" on the polished walls would be no more incongruous than the sharpness with which those liquid eyes look after the main chance, and the decided twang with which those curved and gracious lips utter their dreary common-

place. *Things* here are what they seem, but the woman is a fine Florentine frame holding a coarse and common wood-cut, out of which no soul speaks, from which no inspiration springs.

All in the soft spring morning I stand in my new kitchen, empty, swept, and garnished, and survey the wonders which the hand of man hath wrought. The old kitchen was admirable in its day—equally an advance on its predecessors—but the new embraces all improvements, and I may say inventions, up to date. And how pleasant it is, and how convenient! The wainscots, the soft, gray ceilings, are warm and bright with the morning sun, yet the buff window-shades would make a sunshine in a shady place. The ancestral stove has gone down into Plutonic regions to do extraordinary service in emergencies, and a new stove, bright and black, interlaced with water-pipes, and honeycombed with dampers and registers and ash-holes and air-chambers, reigns in its stead. A copper boiler, tall, round, and red, rises in its appropriate niche, stately as a Greek column, and fraught with warmth and comfort and cheer that Grecian column never knew, because its inmost heart was only the cold, dead marble, while my ruddy pillar throbs with the very pulse of the machine. Brazen faucets gleam on its curved surface, and water-pipes branch out from it in all directions. Yonder stands the force-pump, brave with polished brass and shining steel. The closets are broad and ample, with drawers and shelves and nooks and hooks for every device of man's fertile brain. Through the eastern window comes the first dawn, and through the west the

last fading of the sun. I open a door on the north, and up and down to my very feet slope the gentle hills; and all above and around are the blue sky and the arching elms, and the wide expanse of the lovely world. What a wonderful thing it is to be born into the sunshine and the summer! One little box of a house niched somehow into the illimitable universe! Into it we come from the unknown; out of it we go into the unknown. Between, a few heart-beats, a haste, a heat, a passion, a purpose, and then the eternal peace. Shuts down again around us the mystery of the *shall be*, just as impenetrable as that of the *has been*, and neither greater than that of the actual *is*. The yesterday-world did not know me, and the to-morrow world will not know me, and myself I know not to-day. The clock strikes—the old clock that has been striking for generations—and its voice rings as brisk and clear and cheery as when it struck its first note. Its hands mark the unerring hours but for them whose hand set all its life astir, and them that looked and listened;

> "Their bones are dust,
> And their good swords rust;
> Their souls are with the saints, I trust."

The clock ticks away untiringly, the moats float out their everlasting leisure in the slant sunshine, and I think of one who

> "Swept a floor as to God's law,
> And made that and the action fine;"

whose kitchen was no mere work-room, desecrated to toil, and to be deserted at the first opportunity, but a centre of household activities, a focus of home life. In

that room reigned order and system and spotless purity—the very principles that hold the worlds in hand. Here economy was practiced, not as a stern, enforced duty, but from a subtle sense of harmony—the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Waste was abhorred, not so much because it was costly as because it was wrong. Forethought gave worth to industry, and intelligence lifted homely household work up from the level of labor into the dignity of administration. Such service was like the service of nature, whose forces achieve noiselessly for the most part, but always achieve.

And shall ignorance and untidiness and clumsy recklessness lord it over this peaceful domain? Must rude hands mar this comely array, dim the lustre, and tarnish the purity, and leave the trail of the serpent over it all? I suppose eternal vigilance is the price of culinary perfection, and it is too great a price to pay. So my brass will become dimmed, and my fine copper changed. I shall look after matters somewhat; but because the ruling principle comes from without, and not from within, there will always be lapses from kitchen propriety. Coffee will be left standing in the coffee-pot; kettles will be put away not thoroughly cleaned and dried, to gather foulness and rust; the broom will be left to stand on the broom-end, and spoil for lack of thrift to put on a fresh loop when the old one is worn out; the dish-towels will drop into the wood-box, and be lost both to sight and memory; the ironing-cloth will be rumpled and jammed into the drawer instead of being nicely folded and laid away; the window-glass will gather

specks, and the clock's mirror-face will become clouded, and the ceiling will be festooned here and there with dainty cobwebs, and I mentally shake my fist at the, as yet, purely mental intruder whose far-off coming already makes

"Discord on the music fall,
And darkness on the glory!"

Oh! why, when every prospect pleases, should only man be vile, especially woman? For, unquestionably vile as man is, he has not shown his vileness here. Indeed he has shown quite the opposite—skill, ingenuity, not to say benevolence. Every thing here which excites my admiration is the work of man. I wonder if women could not have done it just as well. This fine finger-work of painting and graining and polishing might certainly be wrought even by lady-fingers. A great deal of the work of a carpenter requires skill rather than strength—no more strength, certainly, than many a woman commands. The lifting of heavy beams, the painting of sky-roofs, might be beyond her power, and in that fact I suppose lies her real disability. The master-workman may not call upon his reserved strength by the week together, but he can not carry on his business unless it is there, to be called on in an emergency. The householder pays his man-servant higher wages for the same work than his maid-servant; but if he wishes an errand dispatched at midnight, or in the midst of a driving snow-storm, he sends his man-servant at once, where his maid-servant he would not dream of sending. In paying the extra price, in choosing the boy for an apprentice and refusing the girl, these facts no doubt

have their weight. Yet carpenters might teach their wives and daughters and sisters how to handle the plane and chisel and saw, to immense advantage. Some women have a natural turn for mechanics, and a little instruction would give them power to help themselves over many a hard place. If they could not earn their living by mechanical skill, they could often minister greatly to their own ease, comfort, and economy. They could greatly improve the living that is earned for them, and they could greatly serve those whose lines have fallen in less pleasant places.

This at least is certain: if girls can not be carpenters, they can marry carpenters. Of course, love, as the proverb says, goes where it is sent; and you can not fall in love with a man because he is handy, but, my blessed damosels, you can at least maintain toward the guild that appreciative attitude which wins from a man his best all unwittingly. You can sufficiently possess yourselves of the principles of architecture and mechanics, to know that he who has mastered them has made no mean acquisition, and can proffer you at least that solid ground whereon love must alight to rest his weary wings. To be a good carpenter, a man must have perception and acuteness, powers of comparison and judgment, steadfastness and a sense of proportion; strength of arm and skill of hand and *grip* of mind—qualities which no woman dislikes, and which, in connection with other traits, make a character thoroughly admirable.

The world's type of goodness in greatness was a carpenter's son. Not to a family of the rich and ennobled,

fed by hereditary grace, or endowed with exceptional genius, not to the abodes of the thriftless, abject, and hopeless poor came He, but to the home of skill and intelligence, of self-respect, and self-support, to confer upon these homely and honorable virtues the dignity of Heaven.

## VIII.

## *TO TUDIZ BY RAILROAD.*

Doubtless the completion of the Pacific Railroad was an event of national interest and continental importance; and doubtless, second only to his honorable record in the great rebellion, General Dodge congratulates himself, not unworthily, upon having enrolled his name among those who have won for their country the victories of peace, no less renowned than war's. And what with the driving of golden spikes midway between two oceans, and the baptizing of babies with the mingled waters of the Atlantic and Pacific seas, our enthusiastic and mercurial countrymen seemed determined that no element of the fanciful should be wanting to make the work impressive. It was more like a fairy story than like the actual achievements of hard heads and horny hands in this practical nineteenth century.

Yet for all your golden wedges and baptismal waters, the whole Pacific Railroad does not touch one so nearly as riding up to Tudiz on a railroad. Geographically considered, Tudiz is to most scholars an unexplored region. I might explain its locality by saying that it is partially bounded by, involved in, and a constituent part of, Pine Swamp; but even then

> "It would be a secret still,
> Though all look on it at will;

For the eye shall read in vain
What the heart can not explain."

Etymologically, Tudiz is full of interest. No word analyzed and historized by Dean Trench is more luminous than this, illustrating as it does the loyalty to law, the humor, and the intelligence of our ancestors. Years and years ago, before any person now on the earth had been born, a question came up in "town meeting" concerning a large tract of land lying on the outskirts of the township. The owner thereof, or some person concerned in the transfer, arose before the assembled sovereigns, and declared, or meant to declare, that there was some error in the transaction, which he wished to have rectified. Unhappily, the poor fellow was not skilled in words, or was confused by the unwonted prominence of his position; and, instead of saying "rectified," he put it "rectitude." But these grim old Puritan Solons had no mercy. Nemesis pounced upon him, and fastened to him the name of "Tudy" for the remainder of his natural life, and even handed his shame and its scorn down to a local immortality, since the land he owned and the region round about is called Tudy's to this very day.

But we can not always go into explanation; wherefore, when we wish to be romantic and mellifluous, rather than philological, we spell it *Tudiz*, to match the dark-eyed girl of Cadiz!

A railroad to Tudiz! The imagination refuses to comprehend it. With the institution in general we are not unfamiliar. The engine's shrill shriek has deafened us so long, that the memory of man scarcely runneth

to the contrary; but that a train of cars should deliberately leave the beaten track of trade and travel, and roll off toward Tudiz and Pine Swamp, seems to us yet an almost incredible thing. I can more easily believe in the scaling of the Sierra Nevada, or in penetrating the Yosemite, than in modernizing Tudiz. The West was made to be modernized. Telegraphs and steam-carriages were invented to this very end; but Tudiz is sacred to the past.

If the Spirit of Conservatism could anywhere say to the Spirit of Progress, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," it would certainly be at the old stone-wall which fences off Tudiz and the river meadows. But that wall of division is broken down, and all our secret haunts are laid open to the march of improvement.

As you stand on the platform of the staggering car, the wild rushing wind blowing your hat one way, and your hair all ways, you see not the railroad crowd, but the dead generations. You are cutting through the corn-fields, the woodlands, the cranberry-meadows, the blueberry-swamps, that have descended from father to son for ages, unvexed by greed, unassailed by ambition. What does Master Stephen think of you, seven devils that you are, snorting, screaming, plunging past his backdoor without so much as saying "by your leave?" Master Stephen, the stately gentleman who dwelt so grandly on his ancestral acres, and, with pardonable excess of pride, wanted no son of his to go out into the coarse scramble of trade, but thought the best way for a young man to acquire property was to wait and inherit it! In the eagerness and mad haste of this day,

I love to remember that there was one man who never gave in to it—who set himself deliberately and honorably against it. Teaching the "district school" was not only not derogatory to his dignity, but rather added to it, so great was our reverence for learning in those old times: and truly Master Stephen honored himself, and honored his calling; for he taught with love for teaching, magnifying his office, and rejoicing with paternal joy in the after-prowess of his pupils. Now, when we want a teacher, we take young men from the colleges, who yearn for a hundred dollars to eke out the expenses of sophomore or senior year; young men without experience and without responsibility, who may be mature and trustworthy, but are quite as likely to be chiefly intent on getting through the three months and receiving their wage. This done, they flit; and whether they have wrought good or evil, matters little to them.

Not so in the brave days of old. Master Steve dwelt among his own people. In the summer he tilled his well-loved farm. In the winter he taught the well-loved farmers' children, and faced the fruits of his doings all the year round, and called no man master. Proud he was of his abilities and accomplishments; but with a transparent, child-like pride, that gave amusement and won sympathy, but never caused offense. The offices to which his townsmen elected him were to him a solemn trust; and the well-kept pages of many a year's record show how faithfully he held it. All the duties of life bore him honor; and never king went to his coronation with form more erect, with tread more majestic, or dignity more unalloyed, than he to his he-

reditary pew in the village church. Brave and blameless gentleman! We have fallen on other days and other ways, and the world wears more loosely-fitting garments than was its wont; but I question if we have not lost, as well as gained, somewhat by the change.

Shriek on, you fiery-breathed dragon; what do you care for the blackberry-patches where we stained our fingers and tore our clothes a hundred years ago? Profane the silences of the greenwood, broken only in winter by the woodman's axe. Rush, mad monster that you are, past you still house half hidden beneath its elms of the centuries, and give no thought to the mute, inglorious Milton who used to haunt it. Unhappy Kennettell, gifted beyond the common lot, but doomed by some untoward fate to be chained to his muck-rake forever! No improvisatore of Italy could rhyme more readily than he; but he never went farther than to amuse the village shopman — never within my knowledge; but as I was one day walking down a green lane, I was suddenly aware of some one behind me; and, using the eyes which we all have in the back of the head, soon ascertained that it was Kennettell wheeling a wheelbarrow. For a long space he followed me at a respectful distance, till I presently turned aside and plucked a buttercup, to let him pass. To my surprise, instead of passing, he set down his wheelbarrow, and waited as punctiliously for me to resume my walk as if I had been a monarch of the Middle Ages, and he my most humble courtier. Presently he spoke:

"May I be permitted to ask if this is the author who is known by the name of 'Vitriol Vixen?'"

I was rather overcome. I had never heard of him except as "old Kennettell" — with or without the adjective prefixed — a drunken village vagabond, with great facility in writing verses. But it was a gentleman who addressed me with the courtliness, the deference, the elegance of the old school; his manner was entirely self-possessed, his words were deliberate, his voice, but for a certain hollowness which comes from dissipation, cultivated. What evil fairy frowned upon his cradle, and sent him stooping, tottering, maudling through the streets, in a solitary and dishonored old age, instead of setting him to grace and illustrate his time? He should have been Kennettell, poet and gentleman, instead of hanging around the shoe-makers' shops — old Kennettell, half crazy, and, when he is not crazy, drunk.

"Not a bit of it," I answered, heartily, but gazing all the while into his heavy eyes, if perhaps I might somewhere, somehow, see the Kennettell that God meant, rising, evolving, extricating itself from the Kennettell that had become. "Not a bit of it. I am only myself; but you, I hear, are given to composition."

"I am, indeed, not unused to the pen. In my earlier days, I used to contribute to several periodicals."

"Under your own name?"

"Sometimes, but usually under a pseudonym. My favorite name was Rinaldo, and that title I used most frequently."

"I should like much to see some of your writings. Have you preserved any of them?"

"None. They floated about in the 'Ladies' Maga-

zine,' in 'The Boston Mirror,' and in many other papers. I used to be much solicited and well paid."

And through some fatal moral gravity, some irresistible downward tendency, this man lost the heights he should have gained—did for his fellows no better service than to tend through the small-pox some wretched scalawag, whose bedside, indeed, he would occasionally leave for a while, to go around and make a friendly call on the neighbors, so that the small-pox had a fair chance to show its hand; and if it did not embrace the opportunity, and the population too, it must have been an inferior article.

Thus he maundered through his feeble, useless life, and died in the poor-house. The home of his haunting stands silent under the hill, and out of his grave comes no voice. Faint spark of divine life, dim glimmering through degraded years, choked out of the world at last, is there never and nowhere any relighting?

Whiz and roar and clatter and shake and rush, as if the one object in life were to get away from, and get to, somewhere. Passengers from near and far, why do you look so careless and vacant? Why do you chatter and chatter, and see nothing? Conductor, put down the brakes, take off your polished label from your breast, and be a man. Do you see that old woman swinging in yonder bent apple-tree? No? What are your eyes good for? It is Grandmother Hubbard, in her grave these fifty years, swinging on the bent apple-tree. Who is Grandmother Hubbard? Oh! that I can not tell you. She was born, and became a grandmother, and died. So much is in her name. But of all her

long life of love or hate, of pleasure or sorrow, of good or evil doing, this only remains by tradition for future ages to the world's benefit, that in this bent apple-tree she used to sit and swing. Whether in her grandmotherly or pre-grandmotherly days she thus laid the foundation of her post-mortem biography, we are not informed. My childish eyes always saw her there in octogenarian cap and glasses, a wrinkled and decrepit woman, bowed almost to the angle of the tree she swung on. It is not much to tell—an immortality of little worth—faint essence to extract from the long turmoil of a woman's life—its sole savor left in departing; but it was accident, not essence. Somewhere — unrecorded perhaps in the world's annals, but not unrecognized of the world's Creator—has floated out the aroma of that forgotten life, and still, over this alert and eager earth, broaden and circle the waves of impulse that she started. Down brakes! Good conductor, do you not see the whole parish trooping to church along the path which you will assuredly plow across if you keep on this headlong way? In the village church-yard they lie, every one, older than Noah and Methuselah; do not you see them flitting under the hill, filing through the wood, dressed in their Sunday best—Uncle Tim trotting on rods before his wife, and waiting now and then for her to come up? They are crossing the brook, they are climbing the stile, they are opening the gate—sturdy boys that are grandfathers now, and dead at that; and among the strong-limbed girls, perhaps, is that very Grandmother Hubbard who swung out her name and fame on the bent apple-tree. The stile is taken away;

the gate is built into the wall; the path has crept back into field; all the parish goes to church by the new road; and only the oldest inhabitant and I know that there ever was a thoroughfare in this beautiful wild waste. Leave it wild and waste and beautiful, I pray you, men and brethren, and do not crush our phantoms under your iron wheels.

What do they think of you at Mingo's?—the merry imps, the graceless, dare-devil, do-nothing, happy-go-easy gnomes, sparks of Southern fire borne by a wanton wind to this untender North, glittering a short, grotesque life, and going out forever? Children of the palm-tree and the desert and the fervid tropical sun, souvenirs of the Sphinx and the Pyramids and the eternal repose of Egypt, wrenched out of all their poetry, their calmness, their broad, still civilization, flung up bare and defenseless against our hard, foreign ways, our cold, rugged, unnatural life — Egypt and the Sphinx went quickly out of them, and they were nothing but a family of "niggers," shiftless, worthless, ne'er-do-well, glad of the crumbs which fell even from poor men's tables. What could they do but drop out of life one by one? There are wreaths of blinding snow which shut away the summer sun. Under the bleak hill they have whirled up a curious mound. The belated, benumbed, bewildered traveler, solitary and intent, pitches through the ever-accumulating drifts, but stumbles upon this and starts back, all his chilled blood shocked into sudden heat and horror. It is the last of the merry imps of Mingo's, lying in a drunken death in the pathway of the storm, till death in sober earnest overtook him. So

they drifted out of the great unknown into a narrow, aimless, degraded life, and, after a little groveling and grinning and grimacing, drifted out again into a great unknown, and left upon the earth that we can see no mark but "Mingo's:" yet known unto God are all his works; and if he must use for building-blocks these unshapely and unsightly stones that will take no polish and crumble under the chisel, it is the least of all possible reasons why we should make them or leave them unsightly and unshapely.

Merry imps, grim and grinning ghosts, sad shadows, gentle and sweet phantoms, it is no work of mine. I never broke into your fastnesses with smoke and whirlwind and fury. I would have left you to your haunts forever. Never should the foot of traffic or of pleasure have pressed your turf. Only some wandering, wistful wayfarer like me should now and then heighten your solitude; only the familiar stroke of the frosty axe, or the crusted snow crunching under the patient feet of oxen, should have softened, not broken, your olden silence; only the gentle and timid cows should have stood knee-deep at noontide in your sluggish summer brook, or browsed along your ancient hill-side, scarcely more ancient than they. But even to this snorting, screaming devil, let us give his due. He makes havoc among the phantoms; true, but it is only for a week. Double, double, toil and trouble, for seven restless days, and then a year of rest again as deep as the centuries. Only a week, and the iron rails shall lie as still as the earth that holds them, and the dead generations shall come back to their haunts, as noiseless as of old. And

for that week, though he bitterly disturb the dead, this frantic and ruthless demon, consider, I pray you, fair ghosts, how much succor he brings the living. The great and terrible crowds that used to descend into our very door-yards, drink all our waters dry, choke us with clouds of dust, jostle us in our own streets — these crowds he swallows as deftly as a snake her endangered young, and leaves us clean and content to go in the old paths. All the booths and stalls that sprung up on our borders for one vigorous week; candy-tents and coffee-barracks; counters that invited you to buy baked beans and brown bread, stalled oysters and hatred therewith; marvelous menageries, that promised to show you a Hindoo cow, and a Persian ox, and a performing pig, and a Kentucky giantess, and a boa-constrictor, for the moderate sum of ten cents, children half-price; fandangoes that invited you to swing; and hobby-horses without legs, whereon you might ride in a sort of round-robin for five minutes and five cents; bears that danced, and monkeys that dressed—all these this rapacious and remorseless demon, this kindly and merciful genius, has drawn into his capacious maw, and let us have peace.

Yet the world is never unanimous, and every blessing has its drawback.

"Oh mamma!" cries our little maiden of four summers, with vivid memories of previous delight and unshed tears of disappointment filming her black eyes, "Oh mamma! I went to camp-meeting, and didn't see the bear!"

IX.

## THE HIGHER LAWS OF RAILROADS.

To country-folk, railroads are Manifest Destiny. So much of our life is connected with them, that the Rule of the Road concerns us deeply. The courtesies, comforts, and customs of the railroad come home to men's business and bosoms.

In favored hours we are wont to say there are no disagreeable travelers. We are impressed with the consideration which traveling Americans show each other, and we even marvel within ourselves, "What becomes of the disagreeable people?"

For, alas! much as we love our country, we can not persuade ourselves that our countrymen and countrywomen are always and everywhere amiable. In all classes there must be a degree of irritability, impatience, selfishness, unwisdom, which at times renders the closest of friends a little outrageous and intolerable to each other. They impute motives, and make requirements, and misunderstand, and meddle, in a manner which is exceedingly annoying when the temperature is at three or four hundred in the shade, though we are ashamed to remember it when the thermometer ranges back to a reasonable figure. But apparently these people do not travel; with all the flitting to and fro which the summer months invariably witness, any

thing like rank discourtesy, positive impoliteness, studied or even indifferent ill-manners, is rarely seen. We have traveled hither and yon, by steamer, railroad-train, stage-coach, and pleasure-wagon, and have remarked an almost entire absence of social rudeness or unkindness or ill-bred selfishness among American travelers. It is unquestionably hard, when you are luxuriously lounging in four seats of a railway-carriage, to be called upon to relinquish three of them, and pile your parcels overhead or underfoot, or in your lap; but our American saints have done it without a murmur—even more, with a smile. It must be exasperating to pounce upon an empty chair on a crowded deck, and meet the smiling sentence "engaged," but we have never failed to see the claim recognized. The man who will lower his umbrella, and be content to broil on the top of a stage-coach, that he may not break the view of his neighbor, is entitled to rank in the calendar hard by St. Lawrence on his gridiron. Nor has he any mean claim to canonization who will hush the clamors of his own appetite, and supplement the services of slow or overworked servants, by ministering the daintiest tidbits of the hotel table to hungry Samaritan strangers. All this, and more, have our eyes seen in these later days. Consideration, courtesy, helpfulness are the rule: rudeness is the exception.

Is it that the disagreeable people stay at home, or that they leave their disagreeableness at home? Perhaps a little of both. Disagreeableness is oftener than any thing else mere impatience, petulance, irritability, narrowness, arising not from natural qualities, but from

a too restricted life. Home is the natural centre of the world; but too much staying there unfits one to make home what it should be. It is necessary for the father and mother to break up the routine of their days, to go out into a fresh world, to change air and sky and scenery, to see new faces, and be surrounded by new interests. It is better even that they should be tired, confused, perplexed by unwonted cares, than that they should forever tread the old, dull round of things. A woman goes back to her home with a better appreciation of its value for having spent some time away from it. To women the change afforded even by a short journey is at once more necessary and more beneficial than to men. The every-day work of nearly all men brings them into contact with the breezy, out-door world, while the work of women is isolating, if not absolutely solitary. When a woman starts on a pleasure-trip, she leaves the whole care of housekeeping behind her, without assuming new cares. Perhaps few men can realize what a positive luxury it is to the housemother to sit down to a meal for which she has no responsibility. The mere fact that she does not know beforehand upon what meat her Cæsar and herself shall feed, is a wondrous appetizer. Many an excellent woman is disagreeable simply because she is wearied, worried, and worn with too long spinning in one groove. The chain ever around the neck galls and irritates. But the front gate clicks behind her; she takes car or coach; she no longer serves, but is served; the perfect leisure tranquilizes her strained nerves; the new surroundings awaken her dormant interest. Old cares

drop off from her, mind and heart are revived and refreshed, and she is smiling, and kind, and agreeable, because she is her true self. If the day of Woman's Rights ever dawns on this benighted land, the first law enacted by the Woman's Congress should be that every woman shall spend one month of every year away from home. And if the law shall be presently amended so as not to include visiting, but to make the month's absence a month of pure journeying, or at least of living among entire strangers, so much the better.

And here, because benevolence is all-comprehensive, let us put in a word for that long-suffering class, the unhappy gentlemen who travel without ladies. True, the unsophisticated mind spontaneously demands what right has any gentleman to be traveling without ladies? and to that query it would not be easy to give a satisfactory reply; but gentlemen do sometimes travel without ladies, and in that case are put to the torture of seeing their comrades marching, under female banners, into clean and orderly cars, while they are forced forlorn into dens of smoking and swearing and all uncleanness, such as the natural man seems to revel in when left to his own devices, unrestrained by female influence. Can there be a stronger testimony to the power of woman's influence than the misery of a man who has been reared under it, and is doomed for a time to the society of those who have been greatly debarred from it? "It is hell," says a devout Swedenborgian of our acquaintance; and when you are in a railway-car with a man given to tobacco, and not well-bred, you feel that the Swedenborgian dialect is not too strong.

There is much reprehension of the indifference with which female travelers receive the courtesies of men, and there is doubtless some ground for reprehension; but the combined ingratitude of female America is not so great an offense, and does not produce so much discomfort, not to say disgust, as does the use of tobacco by a part of the male traveling public. The employment of smoking-cars only partially remedies the evil, for smoking is its least offensive phase; and when the Woman's Congress has its first law well rooted and grounded in the habits of the people, it may go on immediately to enact and enforce the second: that any man who so disregards the proprieties and the cleanlinesses of life as to outrage the senses of his neighbors, and leave the floor in his vicinage unfit for occupancy, shall be forever prohibited from public vehicles and forced to make all his journeys afoot!

But there is a tide in the opinions as well as in the affairs of men, and that tide of late seems to have set rather strongly against female politeness. If we may judge from the newspapers, good manners in public, consideration for others, have clean gone out of the list of woman's charms. The sweet, gentle angel of poetry and sentiment, the creature too bright and good for human nature's daily food, has folded her white wings, and there reigns in her stead a selfish, scowling, exacting female man, who keeps what she gets and gets what she can; who ignores rights, disdains thanks, and frowns with only less severity upon him who proffers than upon him who withholds the only seat in the crowded car.

We all know the calmness, the justice, the impartiality of the press, and from its decision there is no appeal. If the newspapers affirm that women *in transitu* are rude and selfish, rude and selfish they must be, for

"Who can contend with his lords?"

But is not a pardonable abstraction, a nervous anxiety, sometimes mistaken for unpardonable incivility? A man relinquishes his seat to a woman, she accepts it without acknowledgment, and down it goes as another instance of ungraceful and ungracious manners. It may not be sublime good manners, but bethink you, oh! man and brother, who go your railroad journey of twenty miles every morning to your business and every evening to your home, and to whom a railroad journey is no more than stepping from your parlor to your dining-room, this wayward sister, whose ingratitude has pierced you so much sharper than a serpent's tooth, had to wind up the whole house to run a day without her before she started. Then she was hurried with dressing. She had water-proof, parasol, and reticule, to begin with, and has innumerable small parcels before the day is over; she stepped on her gown stumbling up the car-steps, her flounces were shut into the door as she entered, her fringe was caught by some projection of the sofas, the paper around Jenny's hat is coming unpinned, and the roll of calico is slipping from its string. She will certainly fall a victim to irresistible centrifugal law if she can not have a basis of operation to concentrate her scattering forces, and she is immensely relieved by your offer of a seat. Of course it is a thousand pities that

she does not thank you, but is it not weakness rather than wickedness?

But there are plenty of women—young, assured, and self-possessed—who are equally inconsiderate.

Yes, I saw two of them not long ago in an omnibus, handsome, hale, well-dressed, sitting at the head of the omnibus engrossed in conversation. Three men were on the same seat, and two men and three women on the opposite seat. A gentleman opened the door—one of those good-humored, good-looking creatures who carry sunshine with them, large in person and sympathy, at home everywhere. He surveyed the scene a moment, counted aloud blithely, "one, two, three, four, five," on each side, and with great good sense bestowed himself on the side on which the male element predominated. The two women were so engaged that they did not notice his entrance, and in no wise contracted their amplitude. Of course, the men were rather crowded. But it is of no consequence if men are crowded. They have no ruffles to crush, no lace to tear, and their hats are overhead. These men were as they ought to be—good-natured—but they grimaced and contorted, and stretched their heads in mock mute appeal toward the unconscious women; and above the rumbling and rattling one could hear praiseworthy snatches of sentiment, "it's their privilege," "our rulers." Such sweetness deserved recognition, and a passenger suggested that the ladies were unaware of their position, and would move at a word.

"Just as comfortable as in my own house," gasped the hero; but at that moment the ladies became conscious of the situation, and immediately made room.

I admit that perfect politeness is never unaware of situations; but imperfect politeness is of a wholly different nature—is it not?—from positive rudeness.

"You're another!" is the argument as well as the phrase of savages. Wherefore let us be savages for a little while.

On certain, perhaps on all, ferry-boats, one side is placarded as the "Ladies' Cabin," and one side as the "Gents' Cabin." Besides this, additional notices within tell you that "ladies have the first right to seats in this cabin." Yet have I, time and again, seen a row of men sitting in this cabin, reading their newspapers, while women were standing by in groups, unable to find a seat. Worse than this: I have seen women standing with babies in their arms while men occupied the seats! Now, as against a woman with a baby, men have no rights which heaven or earth is bound to respect. What name, then, shall we give to that mass of organic life which plunders for itself the seat that of right belongs to such a woman?

"But women want to vote," you say, great-hearted gentlemen. "They want to go into the trades and fill the offices, and do as men do. Let them, then, try it in all its length and breadth. They must take the chances just as men take them. They must not expect to act like men and be treated like women."

Infatuated men! here is where the pit opens its mouth and swallows you down, and you have not a foot left to stand on, and no place to plant one if you had as many as a centipede. Women want to vote, you say, and therefore they shall rough it. But they

do not vote. You have not yet granted them the vote, whether they want it or not. You are double and twisted tyrants; when women complain of the tale of bricks, you do not diminish the tale, but you take away the straw, and say, "This is what you want, is it? See how you like it!" Do you think that is calculated to inspire a woman with a respect for your sense of justice? We have heard of hanging a man first, and trying him afterward; but these women you hang first, and try not at all. When women actually vote, they may suffer the penalty of voting; but when you thus anticipate disease with your brimstone and treacle, O generation of Squeerses! you add to your despotism hypocrisy.

Do you complain that women do not thank you for your relinquished seats? You have no claim upon their thanks. You have no right to the seats. Not a man in any public conveyance has a right to a seat so long as a woman stands. Chivalry? Not at all! It is naked justice. You arrogate to yourselves the management of all modes of travel. You permit women no voice therein. You charter all the companies. You have the right and the power to compel these companies to furnish seats to all their passengers. You do nothing of the sort. You are dogs in the manger. You will neither provide seats for female passengers, nor will you suffer them to provide seats for themselves. You force a woman into the attitude of the recipient of a favor where she has really paid full market price. Ask her to thank you for giving you her seat? You might better thank her for not ejecting you from the car. It is asking her to kiss the rod which ought to be laid about

your own shoulders. The man who does not give up his seat to a woman is simply dead in trespasses and sins. The man who does give up his seat is only so far alive as to proclaim himself an unprofitable servant: he has done only a fractional part of that which it was his duty to do.

I would, indeed, that a woman should always accept these duties with the voice, the smile, the gesture of thanks; but I would that men should always understand that she does not mean any thing by it! I would have her do it because it is graceful, and grace is instinctive, and not reasoning. The polite hangman did not apologize to the culprit whom he was about to drop off because there was any thing to apologize for. I would have women so innately, so organically, so helplessly high-bred, that they should smile and smile even upon the villains who, by their own action, aid and abet the crowding of railroad trains. Moreover, if reason be admissible where impulse is the only saving grace, so great is the power of courtesy that I dare say men will sooner be brought to a sense of guilt by receiving undeserved mercy than severe justice. People in the country are often annoyed by peddlers, frequent in visits and voluble in proffers. As these peddlers are human beings, whom we must assume to be engaged in an honest calling, it is difficult to see why they should not be courteously met. But apart from the fact that it is pleasanter to be pleasant, I have ever observed that your peddler is more easily gotten rid of by smiles than frowns. To the froward he is very apt to show himself froward; but he is speedily smothered with sweetness.

So let women be always and everywhere gracious, because God hath made them so; but let that graciousness be to men a means of grace, and not an engine of destruction. When women are allowed to vote it will be time to talk about letting them stand in public carriages; but until then the least a man can do is to lie with his hand on his mouth, and his mouth in the dust, till every woman is comfortably seated.

The tradition that men always do resign to women their seats in public carriages may as well yield to the established fact that they do not. Voting or no voting, it is very common to see men sitting and women standing in the horse-cars, and it is a sight not unseen in steam-cars. In and about Boston the rule seems to be, "first come first served." The cars are daily filled to their utmost capacity—seats, aisles, and platforms; and a woman takes her chance with the rest. In New York, I think, she fares better; in Philadelphia, better still; while in Washington the traveling mind has been trained to a politeness which leaves nothing to be desired.

The excuse of recreant knights, those Bayards suffering fear and deprecating reproach—their excuse until they bethought themselves of the suffrage—is, that they are tired. They have been on duty all day, and their fatigue is such that they do not feel bound to yield their rest in favor of women who, for aught they know, are simply amusing themselves with shopping or jaunting.

And this is a comparatively valid excuse. At least, it is not depravity so total as is involved in what one is tempted to call the voting dodge. Only say it out boldly, and stand by it. To be sure, dear sirs, you

confess yourselves shambling and ineffective. It implies that you give in to railroad corporations, and visit upon women the consequences of your cowardice and your weakness. But, with all your faults—and their name is legion—women love you still, sitting still even, and pity you infinitely; and if you will frankly say, and confine yourself to saying, that you are tired, although you are not half so tired as they — will throw yourself on their compassion, even when you ought to launch out for reform instead, they will not only pity you, but —such is the unreasoning and unspeakable forbearance of female human nature—ten to one they will urge you to retain or resume your seat, and count you a hero and martyr into the bargain. But do not be hypocritical and pharisaical, and call it even-handed justice. Do not lay to woman suffrage what springs only from man-suffering.

But neither chivalry nor justice requires that a woman shall occupy two seats in a railway-carriage when she has paid for only one, says her male censor. Yet a woman will coolly bestow herself and her belongings upon the whole sofa, while gentlemen walk up and down the aisle searching vainly for a seat.

If I were not obstinately bent on being reasonable, moderate, and far within bounds, on making no assertion which any right-minded man would refuse to admit at first sight, I would say that such an arrangement is no more than fair. Look at the flounces, the overskirts, the paniers, the ribbons, wherewithal men overload women, or—to change the name but keep the pain —wherewith social exigency overloads women, and then

say if twice the space allotted to men is not a very modest estimate of what women need. I am quite confident that if men should devise for themselves a similar garb, they would be quite as blind as women to superfluous passengers wandering about in search of a seat.

But we will lay no stress on that. We will admit that women, like men, have a right only to the seat they have bought; and then I ask, how many times since the existence of railroads in this country has it happened that a woman has refused or has churlishly consented to relinquish the space which did not belong to her? One would suppose sometimes that it was the common rule. It is not necessarily uncivil or ill-bred for a woman not to offer her sofa, uncalled for, to an able-bodied man. If there is no seat in this car, perhaps there is in the next; and it is far less trouble for him to go to it than for her to shrink into the compass of half a sofa. If the other places are all occupied, and the gentleman, by a word or even a look, signifies his desire for the one she holds, she seldom dreams of doing any thing but resign it at once, without a protest, without even a thought. If there are women otherwise minded, I have nothing to say for them. Let them be given up immediately to fire and sword. But it is not a deadly sin for a woman to be staring out of a window, with calm, eternal eyes, while a few superfluous men are walking up and down seeking whom they may devour.

It is not half so atrocious as what I have frequently seen—a man enter a car where a dozen men were occupying the sofas alone, and deliberately place himself

beside a woman! That is pure malice. The golden rule requires that never a woman shall be disturbed in the possession of her sofa till every man has been disturbed in his. This is not chivalry. It is simply folds and flounces. If any man finds this unreasonable, let him take it on trust. One hour of the folds and flounces himself would establish him in the truth forever.

So have I seen on the ferry-boats, to which I have before referred, men occupying women's seats when their own empty ones were distinctly visible on the opposite side. What infatuation possesses you, men and brethren, thus to rush out of your sphere? Why not stay with your kind, and leave women to themselves? A woman can neither refresh nor revenge herself by going over to your side of the boat. You poach on her manor without fear of reprisals; and if she does not gush forth gratitude when you offer late and scant justice, you send a paragraph to the newspapers bemoaning the deterioration of female manners!

> "Fleet foot on the correi,
> Sage counsel in cumber,
> Red hand in the foray,
> How sound is thy slumber,"

when thine own small sins pass before thee!

Alas! one woman among a thousand have I seen. She was well dressed, and to the casual glance looked like a lady. She had pre-empted four seats in the crowded car. I had followed a brilliant friend into the train for the pleasure of half an hour's chat. My friend was standing by the empty seats, running up a flag of

distress. "There are no seats to be had but these, and these are not to be had. Engaged."

"I don't know," said an incredulous gentleman near. "I have been waiting half an hour, and nobody has been in during that time."

I remembered the precepts and example of an elder in Israel, for such case made and provided, and said blandly: "We will occupy the seats till your friends come, with your permission." The lady made no reply. She gave no sign of assent. Not a smile flitted across her face. On the contrary, she assumed a severity of aspect that would strike a chill to the warmest heart. Her silence became sonorous with disapprobation. The very corn-sheaves of her bonnet bristled with displeasure. Seeing that we were about to be annihilated, we took our lives in our hands, and turned the back of the seat so that we should not be forced to confront that awful visage, adding, apologetically, "When your friends come, the seat shall be turned back again." But no relenting softened the outlines of the stern countenance. Then we began our longed-for talk, and the minutes flew, and the engine snorted, and the train gave its initiative jerk, and we rolled out of the grumbling and smoky station; and then came up a young man, one young man, to the lady behind us—only one young man, and no more. Thereupon I turned to the disappointed lady, and said, meekly, "Your friends have not come?"

Then and there broke out the irrepressible conflict. Forth from the irate lips, with a deliberation of utterance, with an asperity of tone, and an acerbity of ges-

ture, of which mortal pen can give little notion, and under which a terrified soul still shivers, came the decisive answer,

"They—*have*—NOT!"

Nothing but conscious innocence could sustain one in this trying ordeal.

Now that I have told the story, I hardly believe it, for the woman herself, with her causeless pugnacity, her harsh tones, and her theatric head-tossings, seemed like a character just stepped out of Dickens's novels, rather than like a flesh-and-blood woman going home to husband and children, and sitting-room and supper.

Oh, my soul! come thou into her secret, if such a thing may be. What are the views of life held by such a one? More particularly, what are her views of car-sofas, and the rights of the road? When one buys a ticket, he is strictly entitled to one seat—no more. Is any person legally entitled to a seat he does not occupy? Suppose we go into the smoking-car, or the baggage-car, or take a ride on the engine; does our right to the seat in the ordinary car not lapse? If not, then one ticket entitles the holder to two places: one in the smoking-car, and one in the ordinary car, while his unlucky neighbor is perhaps obliged to stand. On the contrary, one ticket entitles the holder to one seat, which is his only while he occupies it. His coat, his hat, his newspaper, constitute his valid claim when he returns, but do not forbid his weary neighbor to occupy it without discourtesy while he is gone. Wherefore, let us hope that time and reflection will soften the judgment of our aggrieved country-woman, and that she will

not go down to her grave accounting us banditti and interlopers, Goths and Vandals, preying upon the unprotected, and reckless of all law but might.

I do not mind confessing that any fall from grace on the part of a woman is more grievous than a similar fall in a man. Not that women are under stronger bonds than men to keep the peace. Not one jot or tittle of a man's duty shall be remitted! Yet it remains, that though a man's discourtesy may be repulsive, it does not becloud the sun in the heavens. But where a woman is uncivil, the very inward light is turned to darkness.

There are certain points of good manners in which women fail, which yet seem to have been greatly overlooked by their censors. Perhaps we ought not to say women, for the class is undoubtedly small; but the one woman who behaves badly attracts more attention than the nine hundred and ninety-nine well disposed; and when even one woman falls below the proper standard, all women seem, somehow, to be humiliated thereby.

In connection with our public schools there is springing up a school of ungracefulness and indelicacy which, to my thinking, goes far to neutralize the good wrought by the former. Groups of girls travel daily from the country villages, three, five, ten miles over the steam and horse railroads, to the normal and high schools of the city, and return at night. What is cause and what is effect I do not know; but these girls sometimes conduct themselves so rudely as to force upon one the conviction that it would be better for women not to know the alphabet, if they must take on so much roughness

along with it. Typical American girls, pretty, gentle-faced, intelligent-looking, well-dressed, will fill a car with idle, vulgar, boisterous chatter. Out of rosy, delicate lips come the voices—of draymen, I was about to say, but that is not true; for the voices of these girls are like nothing in the heavens above or the earth beneath. The only quality of womanliness they possess is weakness. Without depth, richness, or force, they are thin, harsh, inevitable. They do not so much fill the space as they penetrate it. Three or four such girls will gather face to face, and from beginning to end of their journey pour forth a ceaseless torrent of giddy gabble, utterly regardless of any other presence than their own. They will talk of their teachers and schoolmates by name, of their parties and plans, of their studies, their dresses, their most personal and private matters, with an extravagance, with an incoherency, with an inelegance and coarseness of phraseology, which is disgraceful alike to their schools and to their homes. They will compel without scruple and bear without flinching the eyes of a whole carriage-load of passengers. Indeed, the notice of strangers seems sometimes to be the inspiration of their noisy, unmelodious clatter. They apparently think that this is to be sprightly, arch, high-spirited, and winning, not perceiving that a really high-toned and high-bred girl would as soon jump over a stick in a circus as turn herself into such a spectacle. There is nothing winning about it. The absolute extravagance and nonsense of it will sometimes excite a smile from thoughtlessness, but it is a smile less complimentary than a frown. No amount of acquisition,

no mental training, can atone for such demeanor. If the two are incompatible, it is better for a woman not to know the multiplication table than not to be gentle-mannered. If a woman is vulgarly *prononcé*, the more she knows the worse. I could sometimes wish that our far-famed schools would stop their algebra, stop their Latin, stop their philosophies, and give their undivided attention to teaching their pupils how to talk. It may not be possible to make them talk sense, but surely they can be made to talk nonsense gracefully. Not all can have musical voices; but, upon pain of death, I would have girls taught to speak low. Training can do much in the way of melody and sweetness, but a voice that is softly modulated can not be violently disagreeable. And if a girl's tongue is incorrigible, let her be dispossessed of it altogether.

The pronunciation and the rhetoric of these girls are a disgrace to their elders. Words and syllables are clipped, twisted, run together, mingled, mangled, and muddled into a dialect fit for savages. Girls who can read Virgil and calculate an eclipse will employ in conversation a jargon that would stamp them with the stamp of intolerable vulgarity at any well-bred dinner-table. What cruelty, what waste is this! It is so easy not to offend, it is so hard not to be stupid. It is so unimportant to be learned, it is so indispensable to be well-mannered. Why give time and pains unmeasured to mental acquisition, and then neutralize it all by a ruffianly exterior? Why cast an odium upon education by associating it with uncouthness?

There are disadvantages worse than these, if any

thing can be worse, in sending girls to school over the railroads. They somehow become common. They cheapen themselves. They lose, if they ever possessed, they destroy before they are old enough to feel, the divinity that should hedge a woman. They fall into—I can hardly dignify it with the name of flirtation—but into a sort of bantering communication with unknown men, employés of the railroad, and season travelers—a traffic which is fatal to dignity in woman, and inspires no reverence in man. And this passes for liveliness and attractiveness, or at most, perhaps, it is being a little wild. But it is a wildness which girls can not afford. Delicacy is not a thing which can be lost and found. No art can restore to the grape its bloom; and the supreme charm of the grape is its bloom. Familiarity without love, without confidence, without regard, is destructive to all that makes woman exalting and ennobling.

There are other displays of ill manners which are almost incredible. Girls will sit with their faces toward the passengers, and eat oranges in the most slovenly, but the most unconcerned, manner, and then pelt each other with bits of peel across the aisle. They will scatter the crumbs and paper of their lunch over the floor and sofas. I have seen the clean, tidy waiting-room of the railroad station strewn with pea-nut shells —not always, I fear, by women young enough to be called girls. Such things are simply disgusting. Cleanliness, order, propriety, are not local or incidental qualities. They are inherent, inbred. A lady will no sooner be untidy in one place than in another. She will no

more throw nut-shells on the bare floor of a station-room than on her own parlor carpet. She will no sooner thrust a penknife into the leather lining of the station sofa than she would into the velvet upholstery of her own.

> "The world is wide, these things are small;
> They may be nothing, but they are all."

Nothing? It is the first duty of woman to be a lady. The woman who says that this is making much ado about nothing is the woman who will accost you by name, when you enter a car, in a tone that introduces you to every person in it, and makes you wish that the part she occupies had run off the track at the last bridge. She is the woman who, under the pretext of conversing with one or two friends, informs the whole car company of her views on woman's rights and her relations with her husband. She is the woman who, in a public assembly, when we are all momentarily expecting the lecturer or the singer to enter, rises in her place, fronts the audience, and stands two minutes waiting for or beckoning to some Sarah Jane to join her. Good-breeding is good sense. Bad manners in woman is immorality. Awkwardness may be ineradicable. Bashfulness is constitutional. Ignorance of etiquette is the result of circumstances. All can be condoned, and do not banish man or woman from the amenities of his kind. But self-possessed, unshrinking, and aggressive coarseness of demeanor may be reckoned a State prison offense, and certainly merits that mild form of restraint called imprisonment for life.

We have not forgotten the paragraphs written at the time of the visit of the Grand Duke Alexis. More than one newspaper read lectures to our women on propriety of behavior. The Grand Duke, they said, was accustomed to see ladies wait at home, and not go out beyond their thresholds into the harbor to receive their visitors. "Blush a little; the Prince is used to it," breathed some anxious Mentor to the girls, when the young Prince Arthur was fêted through the country; and common report put a more than lady-like importunity into the requests of some mammas for opportunity for themselves and their daughters to dance with the Prince of Wales. Every such suggestion is an indignity. It is a shame for women to be lectured on their manners. It is a bitter shame that they need it. Women ought to give the law, not learn it. Women are the umpires of society. It is they to whom all deference should be paid, to whom all moot points should be referred. To be a lady is more than to be a prince. A lady is always in her own right inalienably worthy of respect. To a lady, prince and peasant alike bow. How can a woman be willing, for the sake of gratifying an idle curiosity or a petty pride, still less an inordinate self-seeking, how can she be willing to sacrifice the modesty, the reticence, the dignity, which should always characterize her? And yet this is a point on which words are useless. The papers may say to women, in rough or fine phrase, "Stay at home, and do not throw yourselves into the arms of princes; be quiet and dignified on your journeys," but that is not enough. We do not wish women to be such that the papers shall so

speak. Do not be restrained. Do not have impulses that need restraint. Do not wish to dance with the Prince unsought; *feel* differently. *Be* such that you confer honor. Carry yourselves so loftily that men shall look to you for reward, not at you in rebuke. The natural sentiment of man toward woman is reverence. He loses a large means of grace when he is obliged to account her a being to be trained into propriety. A man's ideal is not wounded when a woman fails in worldly wisdom; but if in grace, in tact, in sentiment, in delicacy, in kindliness, she be found wanting, he receives an inward hurt. Therefore, oh! women greatly beloved and greatly preached at—if not for courtesy's own sweet sake, still for love's sake, for humanity's sake, for the sake of the poor, strong, untutored men who will die in their roughness unless you polish them, who will go mourning all their days for an ideal unless you rise stately and commanding before them; who, for every inch of lapse from you, will take an ell of license for themselves, and out of the frogs and toads which drop from your lips in idle moments will construct a whole menagerie of unclean beasts, to their own undoing—we pray you be so courteously affectioned one toward another, in honor preferring one another, be so faultless and so compelling toward the helpless sex, which looks to you for guidance, that a man shall no more think of prescribing rules or throwing out hints for your behavior than of regulating the stars in their courses; but rather as the shipwrecked mariner finds his hope and safety in the stars, so man—whom it is always safe to consider as more or less a

shipwreck—while employing all his energy in steering his crazy craft through the wild waves, shall only need to keep his eyes fixed on you to know that he is going by a straight course to the haven where he would be!

## X.

## *HOLIDAYS.*

ONCE there was a little girl who would have been very happy with her two doll children, Emilius Alvah and Mary Maria, but for the sad thought which underlay all her enjoyment that a time was coming when she could no longer play with dolls. Grown people had no dolls. What there could be to enliven the dreariness of existence when dolls should have gone by, the little lady could not imagine; and she found but cold comfort in the determination that she would set herself resolutely to drawing, and find in making pictures such satisfaction as might be left when the real piquancy of life should have passed away.

But the years came and went. Mary Maria disappeared wholly from the eyes of mortals, and no man knoweth her sepulchre to this day. Emilius Alvah, with a badly battered face, and a sadly shattered ankle, and a shocking bad hat, lay on a high shelf in a dark closet; and, strange to say, no one mourned him. His little mother grew to womanhood; and, for the waste she looked to endure, she found life so exceedingly bright and sweet and full that she never had a regret, but only a pleasant memory, for Emilius Alvah and Mary Maria.

Just as it is with individuals so it is with nations.

Just as it would be for a woman to go back to her dolls for amusement, is it for a mature and intellectual nation to go back to the antics of a crude and rollicking period, or to attempt to adopt the antics of a crude and rollicking nation. There was a time when Englishmen entertained themselves and their wives by climbing greased poles and running sack-races. Men and women in Italy may still entertain themselves by putting on grotesque garments, and pelting each other with sugar-plums. But surely the American populace never presented a more melancholy spectacle than in a certain attempt to adopt the Carnival as an American institution.

Yet the attempt was not, necessarily, childish or unworthy. There is a vague idea that Americans are too sedate, that they have not sufficient relaxation, that they ought to appoint more holidays. But what does the idea spring from? Amusement is for health, happiness, effectiveness. Do not the Americans live as long as other people? Are they not the happiest people in the world? Are they really less effective than other people? What do we want of holidays? Probably we have come nearer than any other nation to equalizing work. A greater proportion of persons are actively engaged in business; a smaller proportion are suffering from intense and prolonged overwork, or from idleness. Just in the ratio of the equalization diminishes our need of holidays. The American workman is not a child with a set task, not a slave with an oppressive burden, but a free, intelligent, self-respecting, and self-guiding man. He lays out his own life. He reaps the reward of his labors. His work does not mean simply

bread-and-butter, and a dance under the May-pole, but solid beef and pudding, a deaconship in the church, two weeks' summer board in the country, a piano for his daughter, and high-school, and perhaps college, for his son. Set him running a sack-race, indeed! He literally is the populace, at least of New England. The quiet country village, with its one meeting-house and four school-houses, may have a few exceptional tatterdemalions, recognized and tolerated, living from hand to mouth—a little Bohemia, half butt, half burden. But the mass of the people are such as the deacon aforesaid. They do not thank you for holidays. What they want more than the State prescribes they can take for themselves without prescriptions. Sometimes, when they come home from shop or market, they will buy a mask, with which their children will delight and affright themselves for a week; but a wagon-load of men and women going about the streets in sober-earnest masks, bowing to right and left, seems to them simply silly. A man striding along the sidewalk in a yellow flannel surplice merely makes himself ridiculous, and they gaze upon him with profound soberness. If they have money to spend in sugar-plums, the sugar-plums are safely wrapped in brown paper bags, and bestowed in their overcoat pockets for the delectation of their own little folks, not for grown-up strangers. Tournament trowsers trimmed with tinsel lace look wonderfully incongruous over stout Yankee leather boots; and our familiarity with circus-riders and outriders makes the haberdashery of knighthood show marvelously mean under the broad daylight of the nineteenth century.

Whatever amendment is made for our relief from work must be made in accordance with our constitution, national and social. Americans must go forward, and not backward. They can never become children again. They are not to be raised by greased poles. They are to find entertainment in society, not in sports. Relaxation is to work itself more and more thoroughly and beneficently into every day, not concentrate itself into senseless revels on set days. With increase of wisdom, occupation will more nicely adjust itself to capacity and taste, so that a man's business will be fruitful of pleasure. Every day will settle its own bills, and leave no overplus of weariness to be offset by to-morrow's enforced rest or prescribed merry-making. Our holidays will then be still more than they now are holy days—days of great memories and great suggestions, of family reunion, of national congratulation, of profound and manly thanksgiving.

Meanwhile our merry-making, our pleasure-taking, is neither unfrequent nor lugubrious. Life is varied, the hours go swiftly, and work is warm with interest.

In the country, where every sound must give an account of itself, the early stillness of summer mornings is sometimes broken by a protracted clatter. The noise assaults your ears long before it makes any impression on your soul, buried in sleep. You become slowly aware that it is not a steady, level ado, but a rattling that swells and sinks and swells again in a series of disturbing culminations; and presently you comprehend that a procession of some sort is going by, and you are wide awake in an instant. Processions are

not so common in the country that they can be suffered to hide their light under a bushel. The household is suddenly set astir — every window-blind opened far enough for curious eyes to peer out, and for the bright, fresh, dewy morning to peer in. The barefoot milk-boy is slowly sauntering by, his newly scoured tin pail resplendent in the sunshine, and his wide eyes fixed on the clatter, just rounding the knoll beneath the elms: one, two, three, four pairs of horses, as different from the sober steeds in yonder pasture as silk from stuff—gay, high-stepping horses, that look as if the map of the world had been wrapped around them for skin, the continents tinted roan, the seas in white; and behind them long two-story wagons, like boxes on wheels, gayly painted, fast closed. But we know it is the circus, and that those gorgeously colored boxes inclose a howling chaos of bears and tigers, and that somewhere along the road, at some auspicious hour, some happy person will see the elephant; but we must content ourselves for the present with the pretty little pony, and the grand chariot which contains such members of the "troupe" as are not driving the horses or stretched prone, dead asleep, on the tops of the howling boxes. A very sleepy circus it always is at this time of the morning; but it sets the whole village wild with enthusiasm.

Then the handbills come and add fuel to the flame. The county paper takes up the parable, and flares out with chariots and horsemen—and horsewomen too—in every attitude of danger and daring, and the odds are you go. If you have children, you say it is to please the children. If you have none, you say it is to see the

crowd. But it is not. It is to see the circus. You feel a little shamefaced to march up on the village green and buy a ticket of the man who has made an office of the rear of his wagon, but you do it. Hosts of minor tents have colonized in the vicinity of the mammoth tent, and on their canvas sides picture to you in vivid colors and flaunting capitals the attractions of the Two Interesting Idiots from Australia, Remarkable Double-Headed Girl—Is She One, or Is She Two? The Calculating Pig, or The Giantess of the Hebrides. But you shun side issues and plunge at once into the lions' den and take heart. For no loud advertisement nor monstrosity of drawing can conceal the fierce magnificence of a lion, the treacherous softness of a panther, the graceful beauty of the leopard. They circle their impatient round—the free, wild, fettered souls—and bring into this mean arena the grandeur of Numidian wildernesses. Before them the keepers walk back and forth in dingy scarlet coats, reciting to their ever-shifting audiences choice bits of natural history with an impassive face and a monotonous voice that make the growling and roaring of the other beasts seem oratorical and intelligent. Here is the huge white polar bear, draggling his long hair on the floor, and panting with heat, in spite of the four hundred pounds of ice wherewith he is daily blockaded, and the hogsheads of water that keep him constantly wet. Alas! the ice-chest and the shower-bath are but a sorry tepid substitute for the arctic floe that his hot blood leaps and longs for. Here is the prowling hyena—that ghoul among beasts, that horror of ingenuous youth, till the same tender hand

which turned Henry VIII. into a fond husband, and Judas Iscariot into a too zealous loyalist, touched the hyena too, and whitewashed him into a roving sanitary commission prosecuting its good work by moonlight. Here in the middle of the tent lie the camels, mild and ugly; and immediately the white sands of the desert stretch around us, and the damsel Rebekah, lithe and blithe and very fair to look upon, stands once more by the well of Nahor at the even-tide, and down from Gilead comes a cavalcade of Midian merchants, bearing spicery and balm and myrrh. "Slow coaching," young America would say; but when Ahasuerus sent out all swiftly a decree to revoke the bloody edict of Haman, "hastened and pressed" by the love and the terror of his young Jewish queen—Esther the beautiful, and brave as beautiful, and wise as brave—the camels and young dromedaries held their heads high among his post-horses. Was it three thousand of such sturdy cattle as these that Job's stables held? Round such tawny, homely necks did Zebah and Zalmunna hang their golden ornaments? And if, as my lord keeper affirms, it takes one hundred and fifty pounds of meat every day to feed a baker's dozen of lions and tigers, on what enemy's country could Job have foraged to keep his stalls from famine, even if his mews were as piously inclined as our nineteenth century beasts, who have unanimously agreed to keep the Sabbath-day by an unbroken fast? No feeding in this circus on Sunday! Let the compilers of our Sabbath manuals take notice. Whether it is for the health of their bodies or the subjugation of their souls doth not appear; but it would

seem as if Sunday must be a rather long day to them, with not even the solace of a curious stick to stir up their sides and their solitude.

And here is that mountain of animated nature, the elephant. Is he an elephant? Is he not a mass of baked mud that lived once among the megatheriums and ichthyosauruses, when life was big and slow and pokey, and has come down to us by mistake, as one born out of due time? Certainly he seems here very much out of time and place. He is so utterly unbeautiful! and he appears to know it, poor fellow, and looks meek and deprecating out of those small, sidewise, modest eyes of his. What straight, ungraceful legs! what a short, useless neck! what an unwieldy head! And why will they make him dance, when dignity is his only rôle? And what does an elephant think of being made to climb up and stand on a tub just large enough to give room to his four feet—if an elephant can be said to have feet—where the appearance is that his legs have simply come to an end?

Before you have had time enough to see the baby elephant, who is but half as homely as the other, because only half as big; or the baby lion, who is as fierce at heart as his jungle-born papa; or the ostrich, who "can carry a full-sized man on his back, and run nine miles an hour," says the exhibitor in his measured monotone; or the quills upon the fretful porcupine; or the always funny monkey; you must go in to see the "performance," which does not, perhaps, rank among the high arts, but which is often a good deal higher than is quite comfortable to look at. It is harder to defy law

than to organize law. Nature established gravitation; but she must establish something. If a stone does not go down when it is dropped, it must go somewhere. But having made a point of putting people down, Nature must feel astonished to see those circus-riders stay up. The broad-saddle riding is not so incomprehensible. Any body could ride standing on a soft saddle as big and flat as a table, and perhaps make shift to jump through a hoop in the air, since the horse, though galloping, gallops slowly withal. But when it comes to riding without any saddle at all, and riding two horses at a time, and standing straight up on them both, and a woman standing straight up on you, and all sweeping around together in a dizzy whirligig—why, you can not do it.

And here they live and grow together for years and years—little lions and leopards, and little men and women—in a world of their own; and you know, perhaps, as much about the one as about the other.

As for the ocean, there is a great deal to be said on both sides, in the way of merry-making.

It is sultry and oppressive at home, and in your ears is a low roar which common folks call the sound of the sea, but which you, better instructed in sea-lore by a sea-faring ancestry, know to be the moaning of the wicked one doomed to construct a rope of sand. Sand enough he can easily gather, and fashion for his rope, but when he fain would twist it, the treacherous sand falls perpetually apart, and his labors have no end. Who wonders the unhappy wretch mourns over his hopeless task? From our fair hill-top the long, level

line of the sea stretches blue and far, white-specked with sails, white-bordered with the shining beach. The long line of blue, the low roar, the brisk breeze blowing already through imagination—all lure us seaward, and with us

"As the rules require
Two towels and a spoon,"

and a hamper or two of hard bread, and a few dozen eggs, and sweet-corn, and sugar-gingerbread, and other such provender, which is supposed to be salt-water-proof, for we will camp out. Let Newport have its thousands, and Long Branch its tens of thousands, mine be a cot beside the sea, and a Byronic mingling with the universe, and a tasting of the sweets of solitude.

Oh! solitude, we no longer ask where are the charms that sages have seen in thy face. We only ask piteously where is thy face? This beach, once so lovely-lonely, swarms with people. Far off the white sea-sand is alive with little black bugs creeping to and fro, amphibious, for they float in the fringe of the sea near at hand. Our romantic cot is overflowed with ephemeral picnickers, and every black crag is crested with humanity. You must boil your corn with a dozen pairs of eyes fastened upon you, and there is no such thing as drowning yourself, though you should wish it as much as Johnny Sands wished to save his wife, for a dozen round balls bobbing up and down on the waves about you, are the heads of strong swimmers who would be sure to dive and wrench you out by the hair of your head, if it would stay on. And what a disheveled, dripping, forlorn set are the

bathers coming up out of the sea. Oh! my lovely ladies, you will be stylish or nothing, and you talk daintily of scallops and trimmings, and you fashion bathing-suits as featly as ball-dresses; but the saucy sea mocks all our finery, and tosses up against our scarlet splendor as undevoutly as over the old tow-gown and horse-blanket frock of our uncaring neighbor. But in we go, with a leap and a bound to begin with, and come near tumbling head first into Madrid, from not counting on the resistance of the water. Ugh! how cold it is! and how indefatigable! and irresistible! In the twinkling of an eye all the conceit is thwacked out of you. The sea will stand no nonsense. It beats you about, it knocks you down. It takes your breath away. It streams into your ears. It pours into your mouth. It rushes up your nose. You are drowned and dead. Who would have thought it was so savage and so salt? You try to swim, and down you go plump to the coral grove and the mermaidens, and up you scramble again —and strong arms pull you one way, and the strong sea thrashes you another way, and every body is screaming all the while at the top of his voice for pure excitement. You leap, and it buoys you up—you walk, and it flings you down. You yield to it, and it hurls you shoreward with a wild spray-tossing. You rush against it, and it smites you merrily and cheerily, but with the force of a sledge-hammer.

So you come out all dripping, and drowned, and forlorn. Not a bit of it. Every nerve tingles with exhilaration. Every drop of blood is warm and alert. If any body wants a serpent strangled, or a world carried,

here is an arm of Hercules, and here is a shoulder of Atlas. But oh! the salt in your hair! And oh! the amount of water that flannel will absorb! And that is why you do not mind how many rows of trimming your bathing-dress has, or whether it is made of linsey-woolsey or moire antique. Yon ocean is a great wild beast, that rends you and tosses you without a particle of respect for your coat of many colors, and in its remorseless clutch you think no more of your wardrobe than did Livingstone in the lion's mouth. And when you come out, never Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of you, no matter how you went in. You can not get out at all till you are wrung out, and you never can be wrung out so dry that rivulets of water do not trickle down at every step; and all your hair droops round your glowing face like sea-weed round a —boiled lobster—if one may quote poetry with variations—for the truth's sake—and all grace is sopped out of your folds, and all beauty soaked out of your buttons, and you walk homeward flapping as you go, and firm in the faith that you might as well take the surf in a coffee-bag as in purple and fine linen.

Who dare say that women are the slaves of fashion and show? Go to, now! To Hampton Beach, for instance, and see what "objects" they are willing to make of themselves before angels and men for the sake of a little wild fun, a little pure, wholesome, self-forgetful excitement.

And when you are once more clothed and in your right mind, and staring like stern Cortes, silent upon a peak in Darien, at the great ocean lying still and ma-

jestic below you, can you believe it is the same ocean that played such mad pranks yonder? Beautiful and bitter sea, august and solemn sea, I know you! Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll; I have rolled with you, and, for all your stately steppings, you can be as frisky as a colt. Unfold your purple grandeur to the dazed beholder, be the highway of commerce, the divider of nations, the great untamed power of the world. A little cord no bigger than my finger has annihilated you, and as a beverage you are more than disagreeable!

One day rises head and shoulders above its brethren, the holiday of the year, one to be remembered and perpetuated.

We are loyal citizens in Applethorpe, and we always "celebrate," either at home or abroad. Indeed, our patriotism is of that irrepressible kind which the four-and-twenty hours of Independence Day can not hold, but it bubbles up and boils over into the preceding evening. There is a warning spurt and sputter of Chinese crackers about the stoop of the "cheap cash store," and through the dewy darkness come mingled voices in shout and laughter, and mingled odors of powder and brimstone. But we are not in the full tide of our successful career till midnight. When the clock strikes twelve, the Abbot of Misrule enters in and takes possession; "the boys" begin their work. The stately church-bell starts up astonished, and clangs out strange greeting to the hills; and the hills, astonished, make answer with the one rusty-throated cannon that has been dragged up the highest hill of all. The villagers

stir uneasily in their beds, with dim, momentary dreams of fire and danger, fading gradually into a confused consciousness of "the Fourth." Ding, ding, ding, goes the bell, heavily and sullenly booms the cannon at irregular intervals, and every body is perforce wide-awake. The din is dolorous to those who live under the droppings of the sanctuary—ear-splitting, brain-wearying, rest-destroying; but to me, far off, it comes no din, but a soft, clear, musical melody, cleaving the silence, the darkness, the heavy fragrance with a sweetness all its own. Ring away, my brave boys! The minister, the lawyer, the doctor, the captain, the grocer, are muttering harsh things of you, but I only thank you for the tuneful voice. It is so pleasant to be awake, alive, in the boundlessness of night. The solitude is utterly satisfying. There is neither near nor far, but the whole universe stretches around you, the one being in infinite space; and the repose is divine. Ding, ding, ding!—a fresh hand is on the bell-rope, and the melody that was faint and feeble rolls out again full and pealing. The vibrant voice rings royally through the night; the cloud of sleep that was settling over the tired population is instantly dispelled; and again the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker, have nothing pretty to say; but I know the little flower-hearts are beating breathlessly, and all the dew-drops tremble with delight. The prairie-rose leans over in its glory, and whispers to the honeysuckle, and the honeysuckle croons back softly to the rose, pouring forth fragrance as lavishly as if humming-birds and honey-bees had not fed on its sweetness all day long. And, spite of the joy, I can not keep

awake. Vain the sweet-toned bell and the delaying perfume. Through the ivory gate my soul wanders, wavers, and is lost.

Snap, snap, snap! the light-infantry approaches, armed and equipped with fire-crackers, as the law of boydom directs. They are making a raid through the village, charging upon the inoffensive inhabitants, and driving away every chance of sleep with their talking and laughing, and the uproar of the pert little crackers. Then there is a lull, a murmur of low talk, and suddenly an explosion extraordinary—a sudden burst of packs of crackers, torpedoes, squibs, and all things that whiz and fizz and hiss and bang—then a boyish shout and yell, and the talk and laughter dying into silence. So between sleeping and waking the short night speeds on, and before the boys are tired the birds take up the celebration, and trill out from a thousand throats the heroism of our forefathers. The bell gives way to these new re-enforcements; the hot-lipped rheumatic gun is glad to rest its old bones; the sun comes up inquiringly from behind the hills, wondering what all the fuss is about; and the Fourth of July is fairly set agoing.

The day is clear and hot, such a day as belongs to the Fourth. We are early astir, for our little Celtic handmaid has great expectations to-day. She is a late comer from Green Erin—a healthy, ruddy girl, with a voice like the north wind, and an arm like the oak that defies it. Her honest face is continually breaking into sunshine beneath the great cloud of glossy dark hair above. I am not yet tired of watching her as she goes about the house with strong and sturdy tread, so igno-

rant of fatigue, so unacquainted with weakness. The greenness and vigor of her native island linger still around her. All alone, scarcely sixteen, she came to this strange, vast land, and dropped at once into her appointed place as featly as a marble into its socket on a solitaire board. There is something I do not understand about these Irish. Hardly able to read, seldom to write, not over-intelligent, they manage somehow to shoot straight to the mark. When we travel, we bring heaven and earth into requisition. Every thing is prearranged. Letters fly back and forth, selecting routes and hotels. The telegraph is brought into play, and relays are set all along the road to keep us in the way we should go; and, after all, we miss the early train, we stop at the wrong place, and reach our journey's end with the best trunk missing.

But my Irish friend Honora takes it into her head to send for "little Margery," and forthwith comes to me. I dispatch the letter, forming the address according to Honora's rapid tongue, revised and corrected by Colton's Maps. That it will ever strike home, directed in that wild way, seems to me very doubtful; but Honora harbors no doubt. "I shall get my answer back the first of March," says Honora, in the full assurance of faith, though to my certain knowledge she is innocent of mathematics, geography, and the use of the globes. Yet, sure as the sun in the heavens, the first of March brings her letter. Will you read it? I know she will not mind, and to me it is a pleasant insight into another world.

"DEAR HONORA,—I feel most happy to have an occasion of answering your welcomed letter, which I have just received after your long silence, for I was under the impression that I would never hear from you; but it's an old proverb, 'Better late than never.'

"Honora, I am a poor old man, after rearing a long family, and now I have neither son nor daughter to provide for me in my old age, but I have new life in me since I have heard from you.

"Little Margery is quite a young woman, and is very proud that you are going to fetch her out to the United States; you will make it your business to pay her passage at your earliest convenience from Cork in a steamboat. I am rather shy to request of you to send a pound or two to her for to buy a little clothes. Dennis went from here on the 1st of January, and, of course, he left my hand empty, which going has caused me great uneasiness and discontent. Your poor mother is very lonely after Dennis, and after ye all. I trust you will not be so slow in the future in writing, for it gives me great pleasure when I receive your letters. We are all very proud to know that Elfreda is married and well; for Elfreda was a good daughter to me, and I trust she will remember me yet. Dennis will go to Boston, and you will make it your business to inquire for him; and if you meet him tell him to write immediately, and you also will answer this as quick as possible. All the friends around here are well. Your mother and I join in sending you and Elfreda and husband our thousand blessings, and God may prosper ye *all.* Patrick has a large family and is well. Be

pleased to send Michael a newspaper. Write immediately.

"Your poor mother is overjoyed to hear from ye all. Good-bye. I remain your affectionate father,

"MICHAEL O'MORRITY."

Honora flings out another letter, with the money so shyly asked, and the winds take it, and bear it to the little cottage across the sea, and out from the little cottage trips little Margery smiling over the ocean, fearing nothing. Safely the trusty ship sets her down in Boston—Boston, where you and I should lose way and heart twenty times in the tangle of streets and alleys; but Margery somehow thrids them all, and walks into our apple-orchards promptly with the May blossoms, as fresh and blooming as they. As I look into her ignorant young face, I can only say, He giveth his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. But I can not help regretting that the good angels, while they were about it, could not also find it within their province to take charge of the "little clothes" so painfully gained, but left them to be stolen by some miscreant at Newfoundland, the "little clothes," and the pair of stout Irish blankets which the fond old father sent to his good daughter Elfreda, and which she mournfully and truly affirms would have lasted her all her life. Cold comfort be found within their folds by the wretch who stole them, and, like young Harry Gill's, evermore may his teeth chatter,

"Chatter, chatter, chatter still!"

But there is no thought of blankets now. Speedily

finishes Margery her morning work, arrays herself, well pleased, in her new-country outfit, fashions a truly Celtic water-fall from her bright black hair, and joins the group of stalwart cousins and cousinesses who are going to Boston to "celebrate." It tires me to think of what she will do and be and suffer with unfeigned delight to-day—the tight new dress, the long, hurried walk to the railroad station, the crowded ride, the din and dust and furnace-heat of the city — but her face is alight with happy anticipations, and I at least enjoy her joy. God speed your merry-making, Margaret!

Now we close the south blinds and windows, shutting out the burning, remorseless sun, shutting in the cool, scented morning air, and loiter on the shady stoop, finding it of all things sweetest to do nothing. I hear the clatter of a mowing-machine in the meadow below, and from the slope above comes the rhythm of the swinging scythe, for so our hay-makers keep holiday. The birds are mostly quiet, but occasionally from the orchard comes a quick "Twhit!" and from the swamp a sonorous "Caw! caw!" The busy, saucy, overgrown robins are hopping over the new-mown hay, the swallows swoop down almost into our very faces, and the whirr of the humming-bird brings me on tiptoe to catch one glance at the mist of his gossamer wings and his flashing splendor among the vines. Now and then the mowers come into view, curving the shell-work of their broad swaths with an easy, graceful sweep that makes mowing seem no toil, but a fine art—a pleasurable musical motion.

"Going to be a good hay-day, Aleck?" says my

neighbor, the President, sauntering over, and leaning his folded arms on the fence.

"Well there 'tis," says Aleek, introducing a rest into the music. "The weather's well enough. It's the wind. If the wind gets round to the south, we shall have rain. If it don't, we sha'n't."

"A handsome piece of grass, if you get it in without rain."

"Can't tell much about the weather. George" (to the boy, whose scythe rattles rather suspiciously), "I wouldn't cut those stones in two, if I'se you."

"*Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.*" Trots smartly by a procession—three or four gay horses, each horse with a shining covered buggy, each buggy with a shining, trim young man all alone. But they will not long be alone. I know the look of them. It is Frederic, it is John, it is Albert—spruce young farmers dressed in their Sunday best. They have been skimming the cream of the teams all the village round, and now they are going for their "girls;" and a jolly day they will have of it, and a safe home-coming let us pray, for they will never think to do it for themselves: besides, there is a tradition hereabouts that if a young man and maiden are upset in their drives their marriage is certain; and I half suspect the rogues plot to knock off a wheel or sidle down a bank with the design of making their election sure. Now the railroad train roars over the causeway, through the peat-field, now it hushes into silence behind the hill, now it whistles out upon the plain, and makes its noisy halt at the village station. It will do a large business for us to-day. Young people

will rush from the old farms to the cities, and youngish people will flock from the cities to the old home farms. Far off their coming shines. They are trooping up the hill. They glimmer among the trees. Their chatter floats before. I know them all, what comfort they carry, and what welcome awaits them in homes where such holidays are indeed all too few! Will the tide toss up a little spray to us? Ah! here they come, by twos and threes; we shall not lose our share of greeting and good cheer. "Here's three of us in a row with on pants," calls the Governor, strutting up statelily to show his first "suit of pants," as he calls them; and midget Butternuts, more shy, but equally elate, brings up the rear, and whispers softly, "I've got on panth," and sticks to the word as closely as if it were standard English. The new costumes have to be scanned, discussed, and admired; a tear is attempted to be dropped over the tadpoles thus hopelessly transformed into frogs, news and nonsense are trifled over, and there is an eye to be kept on the wee boys, who have not put on the practice with the trowsers of discretion, and are continually disappearing round corners, and potentially falling into wells and running against scythes. Indeed, they will bear watching, for the Governor has a way, strangely disagreeable to mothers, of climbing house-tops and sitting astride ridge-poles; and Butternuts belongs to a family whose ten year-old boys have been known to cling to a rope, while their eight and ten year old brother and sister stood at the attic window, and drew them up from the ground into the garret. I shudder now to think of it, and say again, "Their angels, their angels do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven."

But the tiny stragglers are gathered in, the groups reform, the tide recedes, but leaves us not impoverished. Fragrant fat-sided strawberries, great bold Amazons of cherries, smothered in green leaves, are its palpable high-water marks; and while we are gathering up these spoils of time and tide, my neighbor, the Secretary, bids me a pea-picking into his garden. Not to-day, though peas are sweet and juicy and tender, and it is pleasant picking among his grape-vines and his rose-bushes, his hemlocks and larches; but there will be no dinner cooked and no fire kindled in this house to-day. Ambrosia and nectar, manna and quails, bread and milk, butter and honey—this is our Olympian fare for the Fourth. So the peas may sit unmolested in their pods, and meditate after the fashion of Hans Andersen's, who, observing that themselves were green and the shell was green, thought, therefore, the whole world was green; in which opinion good Hans admits they were about right.

But the train that brought our friends brought also our mail; and we will run over to the post-office and put ourselves in communication with the universe, dropping in on the way at my neighbor's barn to see the new colt—a shivering little day-old creature, the tiniest morsel of a horse possible, but a two-thousand-dollar beast, and therefore claiming respect, though I must confess my unsophisticate eyes fail to detect the points which make him worth well-nigh his weight in gold. Four long crooked sticks of legs, and a bit of mouse-colored body—that is all I see for your two thousand dollars.

The Post-office is far better worth while. The Post-office is a blessed institution in the country. It is society where none intrudes. Letters are the cream of social intercourse. In them you taste the wit and wisdom, the thought and feeling, of living persons, without the embarrassments of personal presence. It is conversation at arms-length—these letters whose dear, familiar handwriting is like light to my eyes—letters that bless me with their magnetic touch, even while I hold them in my hand unopened. The daily paper brings the world's history down to date, and sometimes anticipates it. By an electric mystery you hear what has happened long before it happens, and even when it never happened at all. The continents report progress to me every morning, though I never stir from beneath my own vine and fig-tree. I know precisely what the Queen wore yesterday. Livingstone is circumstantially and definitively killed on the first page of the morning journal, and brought to life and letters again on the third. The tear forgot as soon as shed was but the slow-coaching of the forefathers. Our tear is stopped half-way out, and perhaps will never be shed at all.

And then old Puss purrs and wins me out to see her sleeping beauty, her week-old kitten; and while I am out I may as well look into the garden, to see what the sun is doing for my one China-aster and my five sweet-peas; for, alas! my seeds refused to come up, and my weeds refused to stay down, and so my garden is a howling wilderness—when I am in it. And then come the nectar and ambrosia, and—must it be confessed?—

a hot dinner after all, sent in by these friendly country neighbors—but nectar and ambrosia too. And then drowsiness and dreams, stillness of noon and afternoon —then a little of Thackeray and a little of Herder, and then a low, muttering peal like thunder, and we start up to find the heavens overcast. The bright day is utterly gone. The west is lurid and angry. The sky hangs low and sullen. A livid, leaden look is on the frightened earth. The silence is portentous. We hasten to make fast every door and blind and sash, and the tempest bursts upon us—rage of wind and roar of rain, the lightning's incessant flash and the thunder's awful reverberations. The unmown grass lies prostrate before the fury of the storm. The rounded hay-cocks are torn apart, and tossed over the field in wild confusion. The tall trees bend and writhe and moan. The house trembles. The water-spouts shriek. There is a snapping, a crackling, a crashing; one tree and another and another are torn up by the roots, and dragged remorselessly through the orchard, or dropped heavily and helplessly out of the track of the tornado. And suddenly as it came the frenzy of the storm is gone. The cloud still hangs over us, but the wind has died away. The rain falls softly. The lightnings do not rive the whole sky, but only open a portal of heaven in the horizon, and I think more complacently of the dilapidated state of our lightning-rods. The great storm last winter twisted off one at the roof, and after several severe thunder-showers this summer, the other was discovered to have broken near the ground. The blacksmith mended this, but that was not to be so lightly healed. The holder of the patent could not be found,

but the owner of a rival patent said he would put up a better set—these were nothing and worse than nothing, for they had never been safe. This was an alarming state of things, but a mathematical demonstration speedily restored my peace of mind. For, first, the rods had never been safe. Secondly, during the six years they had been up, the house had never been struck. Thirdly, one of the rods was gone, consequently they were only half as unsafe as they were before; therefore the probability of our being struck during the next six years is reduced to one half of nothing. Q. E. D.

The patentee did not seem to see it, but there it is. If any body can find a flaw in the reasoning, let him show it.

Yet I am fain to confess this demonstration, lucid and satisfactory as it is, to be more comfortable under a clear sky than a clouded one. When the west begins to scowl, I begin to distrust my ciphering, and would give up a mathematical certainty any time for a good set of lightning-rods. Not so my neighbor. "You may stick up as many prongs as you like," she says energetically to her husband, who is dallying with the agent that peddles them, "but I shall go over to Aunt Ruth's and sit, every time there is a thunder-storm, if you do!"

The rain-drops grow fewer and fainter. The birds twitter out afresh. The flowers shake the big drops off, and begin to look about them. The air is heavy with numberless sweet odors—the newly distilled balm of a thousand flowers. A healthy evening red stains the softening sky. The village girls come loitering down the road; little maids are chattering like magpies, and

little boys paddling barefoot through the puddles. Two dainty damsels stroll slowly ahead of the others. The sunset glow lights up the brown curls of one to softest gold, and lends a dazzling bloom to the ruddy cheeks of the other. I know them, good, honest, wholesome country-girls; but gliding along under the trees, their white gossamer garments floating in the evening breeze, they look like angels just alighted—ah! this is what they are waiting for, then! What? Do you think I will tell? If to other eyes than mine they look like angels, and if angels choose to keep tryst under our apple-trees, am I such a marplot that I will blab it to all the world?

The front gate clicks again—a troop of shining ones come floating up our steps, and more ambrosia, I suspect, lies hidden under that napkin's snowy folds. Lift its fringed edges. Creamy cheese, the clover and violets of our own meadows; golden butter, that has hardly yet forgotten to be buttercups; light, white, toothsome bread; blocks of rich sweetness, that the vulgar call cake; triangles of lemon and sugar and snow-flakes, which school-boys know as pie— Ah! these country neighbors are astir again, and thus their paths drop fatness.

Beloved and beautiful, my Applethorpe! I know not if the stranger's eye finds in you any thing to be desired; but I better love the ripple of your quiet stream than all the mountain-waves of the sea. Dear to me is every shadow of your woods, every swell of your hills, every dimple of your dells. Your green lanes woo me through enchanted places, and on your blue lakes rests the smile of Heaven.

## XI.

## *CONFERENCE WRONG SIDE OUT.*

THE minister had gone to New York to marry his sister, the lawyer was off on circuit, the deacon was laid up at home with a sprained ankle, and the Conference was coming. What should we do?

Do? Why, there was the church to be tidied up, the vestry to be cleaned, tables to be made and spread, crockeryware to be bought, begged, borrowed, and broken, food to be cooked by the cargo, and coffee and tea to be made by the barrel. I could not get an apple gathered or a log split for a fortnight, because "I've got to work up 't the meetin'-house. You know Conference is comin'." Yes, all the autumn, Conference darkled vaguely in the horizon, and it was when October shimmered brown and gold and glorious, and Conference bore down upon us under full sail, near and inevitable, that the minister must needs go off a-marrying, the lawyer a-courting, and the deacon a-spraining his ankle. So we laity were left to prepare the way for a Conference which was used to good eating, and which we could not let starve on our hands without incurring perpetual disgrace. "Besides," said Conference-goers among our brethren and sisters, "we have been to Conference and got great dinners, and we will give them as good as they send."

It is a praiseworthy principle. Sealed be the lips that would gainsay it!

So, as forcordained from the pulpit, we gather to the preliminary meeting in the vestry, for we are advocates of law and order. We will have organization and a moderator. No mob-rule for us. In the vestry the women are merry and many; the men are two, and forlorn. The women hold seats on the right, as is their wont; they are fired with ambition, filled with plans and enthusiasm; they talk in loud whispers, confuse each other with cross remarks, and look daggers over at the two lonesome, unhappy men, who flatter themselves they are talking together, but really, with hearts of lead, are only striving to pass away the time, and wishing that Blücher or night were come, and wondering what they shall do if neither Blücher nor night appears.

"Come now," says a woman, energetically, "go and shut those two men up in the small vestry, and let us proceed to business."

For we are all woman's rights here, every mother's son of us, and knowing, dare maintain—that is, we take our rights without more ado. We have just voted that we will vote in church, and as for our husbands, we order them around well when we feel like it, and submit to nothing but fate. Still, we do our bullying by our own hearthstones, and sit in prayer-meeting as silent and meek as any subject race, to the annoyance of the free white males, who would like to have us take the burden off their shoulders by "offering a few remarks" at the Teachers' Meeting or the Sunday-school Concert.

But we won't. We prefer to sit still, and criticise their remarks after we go home.

Finally, as the cows gradually get milked, and the horses shod, and the tale of human shoes made up, the men drop in one by one; somebody proposes a moderator, and we are fairly a-going. Now, as we are all "woman's rights," this would seem to be the golden opportunity to put them in practice. The entertainment of the Conference is but an enlarged hospitality, and we women must engineer it through. Moreover, the Lord has taken away our three masters from our head to-day, and what doth hinder that we should not be our own masters, and say what we want, and what we will have, and what we will do, without the intervention of the tyrant man?

Wherefore, the chairman being chosen, and the machinery ready to begin, we all sit with an expectant look in our eyes, and an embarrassed smile on our lips, for two minutes. The men think they will give the women a chance, and keep still; and the women think they have got their chance, and it feels like a very large elephant on their hands. Presently we fall simultaneously to nudging each other to speak.

"We want a committee," whispers Mrs. A., from one end of the long settee, to Mrs. B., at the other.

"Then you get up and say so," says Mrs. B., sententiously, which is not encouraging.

After much skirmish in whispers, one of the men rises and comes over to us. Oh! wretched renegades that we are, disfranchised and degraded—the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. No sooner

does this man take a seat on our settee than all the settees bow down and do obeisance as servilely as if they believed the head of the woman was the man. We pounce upon him, we twist ourselves around to face him, we shriek at him in horrid whispers, none of which can he distinguish; but he manages to strike a general average, and rises to move that a committee be appointed. The motion is put and carried, and immediately a lively caucus ensues on the settees as to the appointees.

"Mrs. C.," says one.

"Yes, she is beautiful: you nominate her."

"No, you!" with expressive pantomimic gesture.

The little lady clears her throat, and tries to say in stentorian tones, "Mrs. C.;" but she miscalculates her force, and there is a decided case of *vox faucibus hæsit*. Then we all giggle.

"Do somebody nominate her," says the biggest coward among us. "Can't you just say Mrs. J. C.?"—as if it were as easy as breathing, she herself having nearly suffocated in the attempt, whereat half a dozen voices perpetrate another attack on the good name of Mrs. C. But as each voice is on a different key, and as they all begin with a wheeze and end with a whisper, and as we have squatted in the farthest back seats, while the chairman is at the other end under the pulpit, the nominations come to his ear only as a gentle inarticulate soughing. Still, he evidently thinks something is going on, and stares steadfastly and inquiringly into our corner, while we are smothering with laughter over our prowess. Presently one of us takes her life in her hands, and gathering up all her soul, hurls "Mrs. J. M.

C." at the moderator, in a voice ringing from desperation, twice as loud as there is any call for, and then looks back upon us with an air of triumph, evidently thinking she has made a speech, and that it is the speech of the evening. So we hitch along, canvassing as we go, and announcing the result of each canvass in a confused and wabbling chorus of squeaky, husky voices, because nobody ventures to speak alone, and no two can agree to begin at the same instant, till the committee is chosen, and we rest on our arms and query what is to be done next.

We do not think of any thing, but choose more Committee, when somebody brighter than the rest starts up the impertinent question, "What is this committee for that we have already chosen?"

"Why—every thing," we say blankly, looking from one to another.

"To boss the job," says the carpenter, who has joined us, not professionally, however.

"To taste the things that are brought in, and see if they are good," says the chairman of the committee; his eyes dilate with foretaste of the feast.

Here it is suggested on the slowly darkening "men's side" that no one has kept a list of the names. The moderator proposes that a secretary be appointed. Our mouth-piece has—gallantly—no doubt the ladies will remember every thing; still it may be advisable to have the list written, and he will act as secretary if any one will lend him a pencil. The moderator proffers a pencil, and Mouth-piece steals a march upon us by advancing to the front. Hereupon a muffled shriek of de-

spair proceeds from the corner. "Oh! we have lost our man." "Oh! now our man is gone, and we can't talk." "Oh! make him come back again." But he smiles and smiles from afar, and is villain enough to know when he is well off and stay there; and another king arises, seeing our bereaved condition, and deigns to come over and help us.

"We must have a committee to take care of the food," whispers Mrs. D.

"Yes," says Mrs. E., "if I send a pie, I want the Conference folks to have it. I don't want it eaten up by small boys!"

"And we ought to have a committee to take care of what is left, and set the table for supper."

"Why, we are not going to give them a supper."

"Yes, we are. There will be a good many who won't go till the last train, and will want a supper."

"You have too many on committee now," says King Stork; "you don't want any more."

"And who is going to do all the work?" we demand, turning upon him severely.

"Let this committee call in as much assistance as they want, but let them be responsible. If you have so many committees, there is no head and no responsibility."

We gaze upon him with pity, remembering the long line of conferences and ordinations and tea-parties that have made our village history a trail of glory, and the innumerable committees under which our fields were won; but we remember also that he is but a late-comer, who, during those eventful days, was wandering in some outer darkness, and does not know that Britons never

will be slaves; and though we are quite willing to work day and night, we will do it as committee, and not as the menials and minions of a committee! Assistance, indeed! Thus ever is the civic mind overridden by organization, and would sacrifice the noble pride of the rural districts to the same false god.

"We ought to have a committee on carriages," suggests one of the elect ladies.

"What do you want of carriages?" asks King Log.

"Why, to bring the people to and from the station."

"Nonsense. If they are well they can walk, and if they are sick they had better stay at home."

"But the ministers, we mustn't make them walk." Forever to the female eye is your clergyman baked of purest porcelain; no common earthenware is he.

"Do 'em good," rejoins Earthenware, brusquely; "they will enjoy it. When we had the ordination, didn't Jeremy Taylor and Jonathan Edwards walk all the way and think it was fun?"

The elect lady is silenced, but not convinced. Meanwhile there has been a vote taken, and she holds up her hand. "What are you voting for? Take down your hand," cry the imperious whispers.

"I won't; I'm going to vote."

"But you are voting contrary-minded. We've all voted for Miss Mary B."

"I don't care. I'd rather be contrary-minded than lose my vote." And men have the audacity to say that in the kingdom coming, of female suffrage, the best women will not vote!

"Take Mrs. X. Y. for the other one."

"What is that? Mrs. X. Y.? No, she is deaf, and she told me it was no use to put her on any thing. Why don't you have Mrs. Q. P.?"

"Mrs. Q. P.! She can't come. You need not nominate her."

"Why can't she? She is a real good hand."

"But don't you know? She—why—she has a little baby."

"No, she hasn't. Her baby is two years old, and can stay with its grandmother."

"But she has another."

"I don't believe it!"

"It's true."

"How old is it, come?"

"Born in July."

"Well, that's news to me."

Every body is taken aback, and the whole Conference comes to a dead halt over this problematical baby; but the definite date seems to silence doubts. If you can assert that a baby was born on a fixed day, it follows as the night that day that he was really born. So presently we return to business. Shall we have tea and coffee? No. Tea, but not coffee. Yes, tea and coffee. You can't make them both. Mrs. H. says you may have her cooking-stove. I will give the coffee rather than not have it. How much tea do we need? Oh! twenty or thirty pounds. Absurd! Six pounds is enough. Why, how many will be here? Thirty churches belong to the Conference. And they will all come. And most of 'em won't have any regular meals for two days beforehand, so as to get up an appetite.

Oh! have we got a committee to go around and see what people will give? If we don't, they will all send in cake or pies, and we sha'n't have any bread and meat. La! we haven't half committees enough. We ought to have sixteen more committees, two on each. Oh! see how Mrs. M. wants to be in office! She thinks if there are sixteen she will stand a chance. Why look! Mrs. N. and Mrs. O. aren't on any thing. They ought to be, they are so public-spirited. Well, make a committee and put them on. But we've got committees on every thing you can think of. Make a general committee, then. But the first was a general committee. And this will be a general-in-chief. Make it quick. And the perplexed King Stork puts his private opinions in his pocket, and moves that Mr. N., Mr. O., Mr. P., and Mr. Q. be appointed a general committee.

"And their wives!" yell the settees, in their enraged whispers.

"And their wives," echoes the mouth-piece, subdued beyond even the semblance of resistance.

And then, having formed committees enough to get ourselves all in honorable positions, we depart in peace; not fancying that we have made a brilliant stand for woman's rights, but firm in the faith that we shall come out strong on the Conference dinner. And if you win the battle, what matter whether you do it by Harder's tactics or your own?

Conference Right Side Out is a very different and a very decorous thing. No committee, no squeaky voices, no seven women laying hold of one man, no croaking about cooking or pottering about pottery, but a digni-

fied assembly of clergy and delegates met to report on the state and progress of their several Zions, to hear a memorial sermon, to take counsel with each other on the work of the Lord, and stir up their own pure minds by way of remembrance. Still, if you ask how the Conference was, ten to one the delighted villager will reply, enthusiastically:

"Oh! every thing went beautifully. There were two hundred and fifty people sat down to dinner, and enough for every body, and plenty left. The baked beans and brown-bread went like every thing."

Angels and ministers of grace defend us! I wish to know if the churches are sound in the faith and alive in the spirit, and I am answered in baked beans! Yes, and I venture to say, if we could get at the core of things, good Christians as we all are, though we don't all know it, that not one of us who receive the Conference takes the least thought for the state of the churches. What we had at heart was to furnish a good dinner for the clergy and the laity.

And how they did come! It rained almost incessantly, and we all know the frantic efforts of the ministers and the religious newspapers to make people disregard the weather on Sundays, and the blank array of empty pews with which people respond whenever there is a cloud in the sky no bigger than a man's hand. So we went to church bemoaning our loaded hampers, and resolving to stay and dine ourselves rather than our viands should be lost—especially as we had no dinner at home—and lo! a great multitude had gone up to the courts of the Lord, and our pews were full in spite of

the rain, and those of us who came to eat remained to serve.

"What shall we do with our loaves and fishes?" communed the villagers on their way to the tabernacle.

"What shall we do with the people that have come to eat them?" they asked, in the consternation of hospitality, when the tabernacle door flew open to the throng that gathered there.

I must confess I attempted to stir up sedition, but met with inglorious failure. Seeing the chaos and care, the tables to be made, the settees to be turned and overturned, the order to be disordered, and the disorder to be reorganized into order, I said, "It is too much work. It is fatiguing to think of." And every body cried with one voice, "Not in the least!" Indeed, they were as blithe as blackbirds, and as chattering. It was fun, and society, and good cheer. The more the merrier, both of hosts and guests; so then I turned right about face, determined to pick a quarrel with the existing order of things somehow, and said: "This shows how much we need amusements. This Conference is a sort of ecclesiastical ball and supper. They are talking instead of dancing up in the ball-room, but they look not much more solemn than the average American going through a cotillon, and I reckon the average cotillon American does not cheat in trade, does not snub his wife, does not lose his temper much oftener than the average church American. But we churchlings have so discountenanced amusements that we are infinitely amused by so small a change in our daily life as doing by the dozen once in seven years what we do singly at home

every day. The pleasure of getting out of the narrow routine of home, of getting together with our friends and neighbors, takes the wear and tear out of the work, and instead of wearying refreshes and heartens us. Why do we not, then, learn a lesson from this, and invent pleasant little assemblies for and of ourselves, with or without baked beans, where young and old can meet and chat and sing and play such games as do not go against the conscience of the brethren?—"and retail gossip, tittle-tattle, scandal, and slander," say the purists and wiseacres who have been reared in the belief that such is the black catalogue and history of village sewing societies.

Well, villagers might be guilty of worse crimes. Scandal, slander, gossip, tittle-tattle—hard names all. And rough usage dealers in such wares receive at the hands of the theorists. But are the little imps quite as black as they are painted?

Humanity, as it lies under our observation, exists in three layers. The first is the superficially polite and smiling one. The neighbors call on you, and you return their calls. You meet them in the street and at church. All is civility, kindness, and good-fellowship. That is layer number one.

Then you fail in business, your lover jilts you, you quarrel with your wife, your son is rusticated at college, and the whole world turns glad and malignant, and the air is darkened with the cloud of bad, false, harsh rumors. No wonder you failed in business! You have been living extravagantly these five years, with purple and fine linen and sumptuous fare, wine

and equipage, endless entertainment, and a houseful of servants — for to such dimensions swells your modest ménage under the magnifying-glass of your excited neighbors. Your jilting lover has ever been a reluctant wooer; your wife you have abused since the first year of your marriage; and the trouble with your son is that he made himself vile and you restrained him not, and now he has killed a man, and is hiding from the authorities with a price set upon his head. This is layer number two; and you are ready to rent a lodge in some vast wilderness, where you may be free from the sight of a malicious, evil-speaking people, that rejoices in its neighbor's misfortunes.

But give your auger another twist, and you will have penetrated quite through this bed of mire, and come into another stratum, clean and wholesome, and purer and finer far than any thing you have yet found. When a trouble comes whose source can be never so faintly traced back to your own misdoing, your friends, it must be confessed, are a little hard on you. No wonder your wife left you; you have always been mean and tyrannical. No wonder your son has come to grief; you always gave him his own head. The gladness at your trouble was not pure malice, but somewhat an intellectual appreciation of the inexorableness of law. There is a sort of poetic justice in the succession of cause and consequence which never fails to give pleasure except to the persons who illustrate it. But let your son be brought home to you beaten by a burglar to the point of danger, if not death, be yourself stricken with illness, or let your property be endangered by a

fire in the vicinity, and every hand is stretched out to help you. The very persons who would be the first to look askance upon your unwarranted expenditure will be instant, in season and out of season, for your solace and relief. They will run to fetch the doctor for you at any hour of the day or night. They will watch day after day by your sick-bed, will strain their ingenuity to invent some appetizing dish for your dulled taste, will count no service too severe, no drudgery too menial, to divest you of care, and enable you to give your whole thought and attention to the recovery of your health. When your house is threatened, they will exert every faculty to save it. They will put forth precisely as much effort to rescue your furniture from the flames as if it were their own; and when, after all, your house is stripped and not burned, they will come back next day, and replace your goods as heartily and as thoroughly as they snatched them off. Nor can you help a certain clutching at the throat, an unsteadiness about the mouth, a mist in the eyes, a pressure at the heart, when you think of this wonderful brotherhood of humanity—this unspoken, all-helpful sympathy. This is layer number three, and however deep down you go you will find nothing deeper to neutralize it.

We often freight words with a heavier meaning than they were meant to bear. We give to expressed disapprobation a disproportionate weight. We are always trying to repress gossip, and never to fortify society against it. We write stories showing how lovely woman was brought to her grave by careless rumor, but we never show how foolish it was in the lovely woman to

make a grave matter of careless rumor. We are always training the tongue, but we never train the ear.

> "If you would always be discreet,
> Five things observe with care—
> Of whom you speak, to whom you speak,
> And how, and when, and where,"

says Sir Mentor, and fancies he has settled the whole matter; but, if it is all the same to you, Sir Mentor, we would a great deal rather not be discreet than pay such a price for discretion. Conversation would be a very lively exercise, picketed around with these five points of Calvinism! A far better way is to estimate gossip at its real worth. A great deal that passes for scandal is but an intellectual exercise, petty for want of something larger, but sufficiently innocent. Malice, willful falsehood, carelessness of truth, design to injure, are unmitigatedly bad, and ought to banish their proprietors from society; but curiosity—a fondness for story-telling and story-hearing — may be only one form of mental activity, and entirely consistent with great good-will. Let us give in to it with what grace we may—when we have guarded ourselves against it as far as we can. You do not in the least care how many handkerchiefs your neighbor has; but if it gratifies her to know how many you have, let her count them on the clothes-line if she likes. And if she thinks there are more than an economical person ought to have, and expresses her opinion in the vicinity, what harm is done? You need not fling it at her the next time you see her, and make her uncomfortable. It is not necessary that every body should approve us in every respect before we can be

on good terms with him. People may condemn half the traits of our character and yet find enough in the other half to insure friendly feeling and friendly demeanor.

And half a loaf is so much better than sour bread!

Why not have, then, a little neighborhood conference every month, or as often as shall seem agreeable, to which good manners shall be the only entrance fee, and where baked beans or roasted potatoes shall be the inexpensive but sufficient entertainment, though each may bring that which seems good in his own eyes?

This would make the church the recognized social as well as religious centre, and might somehow equalize matters. For me, I am amazed at the goodness of the world, its forgiveness, and forbearance, and general virtuousness. Here we church-folk berate the "world's people" every Sunday about their trespasses and sins, and yet no sooner do we get up a Conference, which is exclusively a church matter, and has nothing to do with the world except to burnish up the weapons wherewith we mean to attack it, and immediately the kindly, hospitable, good-natured world forgets all the hard names we have been calling it; turns to with as hearty a will as if it were in good and regular standing; knocks up tables and chairs, provides horses and carriages, spreads thick slices of bread and butter, and thin slices of ham and tongue, all one as if we had not ruled it out of the Kingdom Come. And we gladly accept. We have no intention of associating with it in the next world, but we are very glad to avail ourselves of its services in this. We make a distinct mark on the sheep of our fold, and

so class them off from the goats; but so far as natural history is concerned you never could tell them apart.

There is, I regret to be obliged to say, one drop of bitterness in our sweet draught. We did not have puddings at our Conference. To be sure, we did not need them. Need them! I should think! Why, when Mrs. Betty came in, erect and confident, with bag, pail, and pillow-case, and succinctly inquired, "Meat cut up yet? Want the scraps," were we not so filled with faith in our resources that, though the meeting was barely begun in the church triumphant above, and the tables not spread in the church militant below, generous hands laid hold of joints, carved out bones, and cut off gristle, leaving large margins of meat, made odds and ends where none existed, and sent Mrs. Betty away rejoicing, to feed out of her pillow-case till Thanksgiving?

No, we did not need puddings, nor even miss them till the next day, when, as ill luck would have it, they got up an installation in the neighboring village, which we all attended, and the iron entered into our souls, for they installed with puddings! In every other respect we think we held our own; but those frosted, foamy puddings gave a whiteness and delicacy to the tables which ours lacked. We like our minister too well to hope for an installation of our own, and the Conference only comes round once in seven years; but I warrant you whoever lives to see that day will see something in the way of puddings that shall make all his previous experiences of frost and foam seem but an idle dream.

## XII.

## *COUNTRY CHARACTER.*

Rustic simplicity is like the snakes of Ireland. There is no rustic simplicity. At least, I do not know where you will find it outside of books. What with the telegraph, and railroads, and lyceum lectures, and fashion plates, every body knows every thing. Think no more, oh city-zen, of coming down into our solitude to astonish and captivate us with your airs and graces. We know how broad phylacteries ought to be as well as you. We know where the flounces go, what colors blend, what shades are stylish, which way stripes ought to run. Do not think to overtop us with your Tyrolese peaks, or overpile us with your puffs and paniers. Go into our church, and learn that we worship just as devoutly as you, with knots just as bright, heels just as high, and hats just as daintily poised on the tips of our noses or the backs of our heads. Ignorance is ignorance, and vulgarity is vulgarity, but their existence no longer depends on locality or population. Mr. Justin M'Carthy thinks that American men are particularly fine-looking, and some one, commenting on Mr. M'Carthy, says these fine-looking men are generally city-bred. Very likely. We talk prettily about many things, and, among others, of the healthiness and desirableness of farming; but it seems to me that no man sooner mars

the comeliness which his Maker gave him than the confirmed farmer, the actual, hard-working farmer. The man who depends upon his farm for his subsistence is very apt to be early wrinkled, bent, bald, rheumatic; he comes to have a hard, shrunk, shriveled look. Too often he bequeaths to his children diminished stature and enfeebled frames. City folk are constantly urging young men to remain in the country, and warning them of the certain struggle and possible failure that await them in the city; but the country lads see sights which impress them more than a thousand newspapers. They see the country lad who went up to the city years ago grown now into a stout, healthy, handsome man. He stands erect, he walks elastic, and his clothes fit! Every thing betokens self-confidence, a man at peace with himself and the world, a life that has had in it satisfaction and enjoyment. His brothers, who staid at home on the farm, or in its attendant shop, present a contrast almost pathetic. They are round-shouldered, and gaunt from constant toil and exposure. They have not the air of command and possession. They are men whom the world has pressed hard, not men who have conquered the world. Their fate is not enticing, yet they see many things.

"Yes," says my friend, the forester, "I got up and went off to work at seven in the morning about every day last winter."

"It was you, then, whom I used to see going across the fields so regularly?"

"With a tin pail? Yes, that was me."

"You carried your dinner, and staid all day?"

"Yes, Sam and me, we cut twenty-five cord of wood, one job. That's pretty hard work—a cord of wood a day. Wust of it was havin' your feet soppin' wet. We had to stand in the water and slosh clearn up to here."

"I should think you would have frozen."

"Did. I froze one side of my foot a little."

"Did it give you any trouble?"

"Lor' no! I'se out there all winter, working in the cold, and never got cold. Then I come home and lay round a coal stove, an' goin' out an' in, an' got an awful cold."

"But did not your dinner freeze?"

"Yes. The' want no other way. But there, you couldn't do it if you hadn't got a constitution to lay out on."

"But isn't it a pity to lay your constitution out on such a hard undertaking?"

"Well, you must do what comes to hand. Jem, now, will make five hundred dollars out of that lot. That's my cal'lation; and I got a good job, though it was a pretty tough one. There's a few men in this town that's independent, and I'm glad of it; but I ain't one of them."

"Who are they, for instance?" for I seem to see a mischievous twinkle in his demure eye.

"Wall, there's Ed Stanley keeps a horse and carriage, and rides round, and lives on the interest of his money." The sly-boots! He knows every one is concerned only to see how severe will be the jerk when Ed Stanley comes to the end of his very short rope. For ropes have an end, and, if they are forever unrolled, the owner

will find it, whether he be Marquis of Hastings or a village tailor; fortunate if he do not find it around his neck."

"How long do you suppose the interest will last?"

"Oh! I do' know that. 'Twould last a good while if it did not take so much to live on. Now in my line, you see, it takes a good deal just to live on. Work up to your knees in slosh, and you don't want much plum-cake or frosted cake, but somethin' that's got some hold onto it."

"That makes work to do at home."

"That's so. But then, when I was out there, I used, mostly, to get breakfast myself, and let the woman lay abed."

"*You did!*"

"Yes. I'd rather. Bread was all made, an' I'd just make the coffee and broil a steak."

"How came you to know how?"

"Oh! I can cook. I don't like to, but I can do it, and it's a great deal better than to have her up before daylight and then round alone all day."

"That is a thousand times true and thoughtful and considerate; but I don't see how your unregenerate mind ever came to think of it."

"Oh, I've thought of a good many things browsing along, like, and, between you and me and the post, I think the women have the hardest time. I've done woman's work a good many times at a pinch, fust and last, and I vow I'd rather do my own. It's the easiest in the long run. But la! settin' round at home, I'd just as lieves clap a piece of pork on the fire as not."

"You are like all the rest of us; that is, work that is not work you like, and for the rest you will do what you must, without whining."

"That's so; but then, some work with their heads, and some with their hands. Some heads are better than others—different from others, at least. Now, if I had had all the advantages—I did have a good many—I went to school; but, if I had gone to school till I was as old as Noah, I never should have been a Rufus Choate or a Daniel Webster. You see, the mind acts in that line, and ambition goes along with it."

"Yet in hand labor one needs brains."

"That's so. You want brains in farming—need to use a great deal of judgment. If it's only going into the woods to cut a cord of wood, there's an advantage to be taken. One will do more work in less time than another, just from the way he takes hold. One comes in, all of a breeze, and goes right into it, and don't do so much as a man who looks round and gets the advantage."

I am sure I have heard that said before in more pompous phrase.

Here is a book, printed in London just a hundred years ago, called "The Rural Socrates: being Memories of a Country Philosopher. Translated from the French." The French, I fancy, had very little to do with it. My copy says it was written by Hon. Benjamin Vaughan, of Hallowell, Maine, a follower of Priestley to this country, once a Member of Parliament, and a practical farmer of skill and good sense. The traditions of his adopted home report him as a white-haired, fine-looking gen-

tleman of the old school, without fear and without reproach. Thus statelily discourseth my gentleman of the old school:

"I have studied with uncommon assiduity the characters of men of every profession, who have been distinguished for prudence and understanding. I observed, with astonishment, that, among those engaged in the same occupations, some were riveted in penury and want, while others enjoyed affluence and ease. The cause of this inequality seemed worthy of the exactest and most accurate examination; and the pains I took to investigate it at length succeeded: I perceived that those persons who formed no regular plan of life, strangers to reflection and foresight, thoughtless of to-morrow, were, by the negligence of their conduct, the sole authors of their own distresses and disappointments. Those, on the contrary, whose steady and enlarged principles govern and guide their sagacious and determined views; who unite, in their several professions, diligence and attention, order and punctuality, qualities which smooth the rugged paths of life, will find the journey more easy, more speedy, and infinitely more lucrative. These are maxims which whoever attends to must gain his point, in defiance of opposition, and amass wealth, should the malignity of men or demons endeavor to wrest it from him."

This Rural Socrates speaks from the gathered wisdom of the centuries and the amenities of a scholarly and courtly life. *My* Rural Socrates has behind him only the courtesies of the corn-field and the wisdom of the wood lot; yet it seems to me he goes by a shorter cut

to the same core of truth around which our majestic philosopher circumambulates with so much dignity.

"That's so," says my Socrates, who listens to my reading of the extract with grave and critical attention. "It's all cal'lation. You may work, but it's cal'lation that makes you rich. Jest so in the house."—Oh! true man! always taking refuge from his own sins in "the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me!"—"One woman will make a good meal out of nothin', you may say; it's wholesome, and palatable, and—*good.* And another woman will take the same, and you—jest pass it outdoors. The difference is—now you won't write a book about me?"

"Yes, I will—report every word. Go on."

"It all depends on the woman. A woman can throw out of the window, with a tea-spoon, more than a man can bring in at the front door with a shovel."

"Of course she can, my Socrates, woman being the superior person; and never is her superiority more brilliantly proven than in this very fact: that with her delicate, dainty, silver tea-spoon she not only purifies her house of all the dirt and rubbish which her husband brings in with his huge, unsightly shovel where shovels do not belong, but she leaves a margin of cleanliness, as your own self admits. Besides divesting the house of his impurity, she invests it with her own beauty, eh?"

Possibly my Rural Socrates did not mean precisely this, but he shoulders his shovel and walks off with an indescribable, twinkling, appreciative, yet sober smile.

But now comes up a greater than Socrates, who is not

to be so easily dislodged. Says Horace Greeley:* "My father was of this [the farming] class, as my only brother is; so were both my grandfathers, and their ancestors, so far as I can trace them. My paternal grandfather raised nine sons and four daughters, and never was worth $2000 in any one of his ninety-four years. My father was an unusually hard worker, always a farmer, never worth $2000, generally worth from 0 up to $500; he died eighty-six years old, and five of his seven children survive, from sixty to forty-nine years old. (The two earliest died in infancy.) My uncle John, born two years after my father, has been a farmer all his life; he is now eighty-seven years old, but erect and vigorous; his eye bright, and his voice as full and ringing as most men's at fifty. He is the last of the thirteen children of my grandfather; one only died of consumption at thirty-three years of age, leaving six children, of whom five are still with us; the rest of my father's brothers and sisters lived to be from seventy to eighty years old, except one who died at fifty, and he was not a habitual worker. All the rest were farmers or farmers' wives—none of them ever rich; most of them quite poor; yet not one of them all was prematurely 'wrinkled, bent, or bald;' not one of them bequeathed to his children (and all of them *had* children) 'diminished stature' or 'enfeebled frames.' Here is a large family of poor, and generally hard-working farmers, the descendants of a race of just such, who have lived by tilling the hard, rocky soil of New Hampshire

* It is, perhaps, needless to say that this was written before Mr. Greeley's death.

since the year 1640..... I happen to be the only one of the crowd who might be called 'bald.' I was more 'bent' at forty than my father or *his* father at seventy; and I am the only one who earned his livelihood otherwise than by farming..... I have been here [in the city] forty years, neither thoughtless nor unobservant; and, in my judgment, more country-born men have died here in prisons, hospitals and the alms-house, in those forty years, than have achieved even a modest competence. And day after day my soul sickens at the never-ending procession of the multitude who crawl on the knees of their spirits to those who have achieved position and means, with the beggar's petition: 'Please give me something to do.'"

Alas! I am in an evil case. I have made an assertion which I can not prove. I spoke of the attractions of city life to country folk, and contrasted the erect figure and elastic step of the lad who went to the city and made his fortune, with his prematurely bald, bent, rheumatic comrades who fought it out on the farm; and down comes Mr. Greeley upon me with a regiment of uncles, aunts, and grandfathers, all farmers, all straight, smooth, hairy, and hundreds of years old, and marshals them "in opposition to my naked assertion."

And I can not answer back. It is all very well to bring on your bright-eyed, heavy-haired ancestry to confute and confound your foes; but think of the she-bears that would come out of the woods to tear me in pieces should I go around among my kinsfolk and acquaintance, and say to one and another, "Go up, thou bald-head. Go up, thou bald-head, and show thyself to

Horace Greeley in proof of my veracity." No, my "naked assertion" must still stand unclothed upon, for I can not afford to pay the price of a wardrobe. Yet I did draw from life, not upon imagination. My painting was a portrait, and no fancy sketch. My generalization may have been wrong, but my observation was right—unless, indeed, I am called on to prove it in a court of law, in which case I shall not only deny its correctness, but shall stoutly maintain that I never made it!

And no more than I can prove my own statements, can I disprove Mr. Greeley's; but I can do the next best thing, and show that they do not amount to any thing. I admit that his family are all as tall, and hale, and old as he represents, though I have seen none of them. But I have seen *him*. Now, he says he is the most "bald" and "bent" of the whole crowd; thinks he works harder at sixty than his farming friends did at thirty; and, with all his hard city work and city care, he has a face like the full moon for roundness, and fairness, and placidity, and his voice is the voice of tranquillity, and his step is the step of abstraction, undisturbed by hurry. When, therefore, he arrays his farming friends against my farming facts, I simply set his city face against his city facts, and, if that is not a victory, it is at least a dead-lock! We are just where we were when we started, for the Greeleys are all handsome together, and ruled out of court.

What *I* know about farming is that, as it exists before my eyes, it is hard work, and wearing work, and uncertain work—or rather uncertain wage. In the long

run, I suppose, a man is as sure of getting a living off a farm as anywhere else, but he is tolerably sure of not getting much more than a living. In that sense, indeed, farming is certain work. Mr. Greeley's own figures show this. If farmers are healthy, happy, and wise, of course it is immaterial whether they are worth two thousand or two millions of dollars; but as things go, the prospect of working hard for ninety-four years, and never having more than two thousand dollars to show for it, is any thing but an enchanting one. Mr. Greeley may sing idyls all his life, but his good, calm face, his exalted position, and the rumors of the fortunes he has gained, and saved, and lost, will overpower his idyls, and lure young life to the city with a stronger attraction than all the bright eyes, and ringing voices, and slender purses of his highland-clan can counteract. It is no matter how many fail. We do not see the failures, and we walk by sight. We hear nothing of the journals that die in their infancy. We know only how victoriously the *Tribune* has lived. We do not see the country-born paupers perishing in the city alms-house. We only see Horace Greeley calling no man master. We do not go up from the country farms to be the ninety-nine failures, but the one success.

Of the fortunes of farming, compared with those of other occupations, I am not competent to speak. Indeed, the only way in which I see how a person can ever become rich is by writing. There, you do what you like, what you would rather do than not, what you *would* do any way, and are paid ten times what it is worth, even when you are cheated. You please your-

self on high wages. But to accumulate a fortune by making a half-cent profit on a pound of sugar, or a yard of cloth, or a bushel of potatoes, is rolling the stone of Sisyphus. And farming *seems* to have the steadiest run of unsteadiness. Wheat is up, and your crop is down with a tornado. Next year you have a magnificent harvest, but so have your neighbors, and the price is nowhere. This year your whole farm raises three apples. Last year the trees were loaded, and the market would not pay for transportation. The cranberries flourished like a green bay-tree, but an early frost nipped them in the green. The peaches and grapes promised well, and a hailstorm destroys the whole year's growth. Hay is fifty dollars a ton, but the drought has starved your fields. The marshes at last were fruitful, but a sudden north-easter carried your hay-stacks out to sea.

But when Mr. Greeley asks "whether our loving Father and Friend has so ordered his creation that obedience to his commands makes us 'early wrinkled,'" and so forth, I say at once, No. But he has so ordered it that, if we do not know how to obey them wisely, we suffer just as much as if we refused to obey them willingly. I will not say that he has ordered us to till the ground, but he has so arranged matters that the one thing indispensable is to till the ground. Therefore I firmly believe that farming must one day be profitable, both for the life that now is and for that which is to come. It is, indeed, becoming so. But in multitudes of cases it is not so. I do not deny that ignorance or thriftlessness may be the cause. I only say that farm-

ing is a work which requires so much more brains, science, skill, than many other occupations, that ignorance is more fatal. It requires more shrewdness and sagacity to be a successful farmer than it does to be a successful shoe-maker or tailor. The reason why farmers work harder than their peers in trades is not because they are less intelligent, but because their work is more exacting. The boy who is not bright enough to make new discoveries or inventions in farming may be bright enough to tend a corner grocery, and too bright to be a mere routine farmer. But if the corner grocery will tire of him, and he is too proud or too lazy to come back to the farm, let him not go begging to Mr. Greeley and say I sent him. I scorn him! Any one is to be scorned who will whine rather than work. I never saw farming made easy or particularly lucrative either to man or woman; and neither stake nor scaffold shall force me to say that I would not rather be sitting in my own library, writing at a hundred dollars a word, than digging potatoes at a dollar a bushel, or churning butter at fifty cents a pound. But if publishers reject my papers, and I refuse to dig or to churn, but join "the never-ending procession of the multitude who crawl on the knees of their spirits," begging Mr. Greeley to give them something to do—why, then, let me be given over to uncovenanted mercies!

Another man, "mountain born," says: "I have always been an admirer of the beautiful in nature and art, yet it seems to me that there is an inner life—a wealth of character which is far more lovely than polished speech, fine clothes, and costly mansions, and which is the only

standard by which to estimate a man's true worth. Yet I have been forced, under the most aggravating circumstances, to believe that city people, as a class, entertain a feeling bordering on contempt for their rural cousins, whose manners are not so polished, whose hands are not so small and soft, and who do not always dress in the height of fashion. I have been frequently scorned and sneered at by misses who to-day are my social inferiors, and would receive my advances with pleasure. What makes the difference? My purpose to lead an upright and useful life was as strong then as now.

"I know of a woman who has been from her childhood one of the most heroic persons that ever lived. At home she had scarcely any advantages. She was nurse, servant, and housekeeper of a large family. She was never allowed to attend a quarter's school, and was really required to do the work of three persons until her marriage. She has been a slave to work, trouble, and anxiety nearly all her life, and yet, although she is one of the best Christian women in the world, her rustic manners and language would excite the scorn of college-bred men and city ladies so that her own children would feel it. Such is the shameful power of city associations, that they tempt the young to neglect and almost to scorn those to whom they are bound by the strongest and most sacred ties."

I think my friend is violently wrong and deeply right. Now, then, let us draw the line exactly on the boundaries. He believes there is a wealth of character, an inner life more lovely than polished speech, and by which alone a man is to be judged. Yes and no. Yes,

because the life *is* more than meat, and the body than raiment. No, because we *must* judge of the inner life largely by speech, and dress, and manner of outward life. For instance, I know nothing whatever of Mr. A. T. Stewart's inner life. He may be a noble and heroic soul, or an ignoble and cowardly one. But if he builds for himself a stately dwelling, filling it with the treasures of art, I infer that he loves beauty. If he gives to Chicago fifty thousand dollars for her suffering children, I infer that he is inspired by the enthusiasm of humanity. Do you say it may have been mere ostentation—that the widow who bestowed her ten-cent scrip may have been more really benevolent? You have no right to say it. If you think so, keep it to yourself. It is bad enough to ascribe bad motives to bad deeds, but he who ascribes bad motives to good deeds is a churl indeed. We have no more right to asperse the motives of a millionaire than of a poor widow. When we find that a man may be confidently counted on to do good acts, then we attribute to him, perforce, a noble inner life, whether he is poor and only shares his crust with a poorer brother, or whether he be rich and gives of his abundance. Too much can not be said to emphasize the superiority of soul to circumstance, but do not let us be too hard on circumstance. It is better to be lovely in heart than in hand, but it is charming to be both! The sweetest temper, the grandest soul in the world, appears to better advantage through grammatical language and correct pronunciation than their opposites. Nobody will deny that, but it must follow, as the night the day, that uncouthness of word and manner is a dis-

advantage; and the sun under a cloud can not make so deep an impression, can not be so easily seen and recognized, as the sun in a clear sky. My friend, I am sure, agrees to this heartily, so we will go on to the next head.

Do the city people, indeed, look down upon their country cousins? I can tell them that we, the country people, return their look with compound interest. But it seems to me the contempt on both sides is very innocent. Cultivated and well-bred people recognize and respect each other wherever found; and to the contempt or admiration of the ill-bred we are alike indifferent. The closer association of cities is perhaps favorable to the growth of that consideration for others' rights and feelings which we call good-breeding; but the vulgarity of the city is infinitely more offensive than that of the country. There is an uppishness, a pertness, a flimsiness about it that annoys you. The untutored rustic is slow and clumsy, perhaps, but, Heaven be praised! he is not dapper. He may be uncomfortable, uncertain as to the proper disposition of his hands and feet, but he never commits the damning cockney sin of thinking that he is "astonishing the natives." Awkwardness and ignorance are never really vulgar except when they are pretentious; and those persons, whether in city or country, who make an awkward person feel uncomfortable are themselves as deficient in manners as is he whom they ridicule. The best-bred people are the most simple. The finest manners are like the finest style, invisible. The gentleman, the lady, has no tangible "manners." It is only that a sweet soul, a kindly

nature, shines out to bless and cheer, to amuse and help its fellows.

Perhaps, after all, I have not so much maintained that the city does not contemn the country, as that it is of no consequence whether it does or not. That is not the same thing, but it is pretty near it—so near that the practical results are the same.

Why did the misses laugh at the man to whom they would now bow down and do obeisance? Partly because they were giddy, giggling girls, who knew nothing better to do. But do not let us be too hard on the poor things. They unlearn their laughing so soon. Their heads often stay light while their hearts get very heavy. And then, dear friend, be not angry; but possibly you did say or do some little thing that was ridiculous. The best men and women are liable to the same fate. A doctor of divinity once spoke of Goethe as "*Go-eath*" in a manner that it was agonizing not to laugh at. There is nothing disgraceful in mispronouncing a foreign name. We all give Paris her tale of consonants; but there was a rotundity, an unspeakable, unflinching loyalty to his native tongue in the way my reverend gentleman named the great poet that was well-nigh irresistible. The girls were silly and ill-bred to sneer. They are older and wiser now, and you, friend, are less sensitive, less self-conscious, more sure of your ground, more a man of the world than you were. You have both improved as you have matured—so do not lay it up against them. Country girls are just as hard on a man whose person and manners do not please them as are city girls. It is not a

matter of city and country. It is a matter of individuals. But if girls only would or could be high-bred! Good-breeding, in the last analysis, is but perfect sympathy. It is simply having imagination enough to know how another person feels, and sense enough to know what to do to make him feel happy, and goodness enough to do it—and be quick about it.

What shall be said of the mother whose weary years have but ministered to the necessities of others and neglected her own soul's needs? Alas, the tragedy of such a life! Alas, that it is too often a real tragedy! The past can not be restored, but the future is ours. The man who turns from the wife or mother who has thus sacrificed herself at his altar is accursed; but the sacrifice ought never to be made. The very precious ointment was not taken to anoint the feet of the Lord, but to rub up the pots and kettles. Its sacredness was in its uselessness. Its use was sacrilege.

Children can not prevent it. The fire is ashes on the altar before they know its cost. But a man is worse than brutal to demand or to accept such a sacrifice from his wife. A woman is wholly, cruelly wrong in making it.

Petroleum V. Nasby, in his poem of "Hannah Jane," gives us such a life-history. Hannah Jane yields youth, beauty, culture, all, to make the fortune of her husband. She remains to the end illiterate, a drudge, slave, packhorse, and her husband rather takes credit to himself for not "shoving her out alone," and never gets further than "if either, I'm delinquent." *If* either! Such a man is dead in sin not to see that he is worse than a

wife murderer. He has slain a soul. What he promised to love, honor, and cherish, he has degraded, despoiled, destroyed. "There's another world beyond this," poetizes the musing husband, but he need not concern himself with that at present. There is this world. One is enough at a time for such culprits as he. The man who builds his own fame and fortune on the souls of his wife or his children does not wait for the next world to condemn him; he is condemned already. He is that execrated and ever execrable monster who plunders the one he has sworn to protect, that he may enrich himself.

But women ought to see for themselves that it is a waste of the ointment. Sometimes, perhaps, it can not be helped. Fate closes around the child, and fixes her in one groove till the grave releases her. Perhaps. I can hardly think that in this country any fate is so strong as to keep the soul fast if the will be not first a traitor. But, at least, let women not feel that any *such* sacrifice is their duty. They injure the very ones whom they wish to benefit. The noblest son in the world can not feel that delight in a rude and ignorant mother that he would feel in an intelligent mother. He will be unspeakably grateful, tender, faithful; he will love her and cherish her to her life's end; but he will miss—it is impossible he should not miss—all that she has lost, all that she has failed to gain—that which makes her his equal and comrade. Nasby's Abel was a villain, but, if he had been an angel, he could not have enjoyed Hannah Jane degraded, as he would have enjoyed her exalted. His villainy was not in his recognizing that she

was his wife, nor in feeling ashamed of her, but in permitting her to become his inferior, of whom it was possible to be ashamed. A refined taste can not be gratified with rude manners, though gratitude and duty join hands. It is not the effect of city association. It is the natural repugnance of delicacy to coarseness, even though it be only coarseness of manifestation. If the whole world lived in scattered houses, all the same the trained ear would be pained by rough words, the trained eye by ungraceful motion, the trained intellect by slow perception. Mother, is it for your sons' sake you are grinding in the prison-house of drudgery? For their sake, if possible, ascend out of it. For their sake, if for nothing else, cultivate your mind. Do not bestow upon them the pitiable kindness of giving to their aspiring young manhood a worn-out drudge for a mother. This awful abnegation may be the stern fiat of fate, may seem the only resource of love; but whether it be fate or choice, at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

There is no finer life than springs from our rocky soil, is nurtured beneath our easily frowning skies.

Eight miles across country, past broad, level fields, lines of encircling hills paint themselves hazy blue against the far noonday sky, or tender transparent purple upon the glowing sunset. High and steep they rise beneath your climbing feet, but from this western window they are but gentle swells in the horizon—but a dim, dreary background of the fair, still picture—wood and meadow, pleasant cottage, busy men and laboring oxen, and over all an enchanted silence. For their

beauty and their guardianship, for their ever-changing and their never-changing, I love my hills; but one among them wears a charm and holds a secret of its own. If you are riding by on brilliant afternoons, you may see the ample folds of a scarlet scarf rising and falling and floating from the attic window, and you will think we are but airing the woolens from the camphor chest; but my hill knows better. Ever he is aware that in his veiled and misty depths he shelters a warm human interest, and that my floating signal, my Scarlet Letter, will be read by welcoming eyes, and answered in such abounding measure as makes Ten Times One seem Twenty.

To-day I look upon my hill with peculiar fondness. Surely his blue is luminous, he wears his purple royally, and this matchless sunshine has woven him a crown of glory, for his message to-day is not for me alone, but for all the world. Forth from his silent shadows where it grew, a little book has stolen into the world, as silver-leaved as the abele-tree from which it drew its name, but sound and sturdy as my hill that nurtured it to life.

Touching lightly upon many things, it touches nothing which it does not adorn. Perhaps not half a dozen paragraphs concern themselves with scenery, but, by a few bold yet dainty strokes, fall and spring and winter rise before you, vivid, real, and recurring. Next to nothing is said of the "woman cause," but, by "the law of indirect effort," all women are elevated and ennobled through its pages. Its women, positive but not opinionated, gracious without manner, influenced but not driven by ideas, hospitable to thought but open also to

sentiment, informed but not domineering, equally large-hearted and large-minded—how quietly, harmoniously, successfully, if indirectly, they work upon the men who seek their small home circle! Opposing convictions are not wanting, but they do not monopolize the field, and even opposing prejudices war you gently, though war they must, being prejudices. In that narrow but independent and intelligent home, it is no question of matron or maiden; but women stand as they should stand, sovereign by virtue of their unrepressed womanhood, cultivated, dignified, free—necessarily, therefore, magnetic and influential. In language the book is singularly choice and elegant. It shows the result of culture and not—more perhaps than needs must in our country—the process of culture. The sentences are agreeable, even striking, for their structure, as well as impressive for substance. The characterization is delicate but definite, the conversation flexible and natural, the thought subtle, precise, and not unfrequently deep, the temper, ah, me! always perfect. There is humor, too, that shines, and also smiles, a satire as sharp as if it were not playful, a criticism none the less keen for being good-natured, and sometimes an honest, direct, and wholesome indignation. Here, in dignified and eloquent words, a daughter of the country presents the cause of country against city. Never, surely, was the bubble of Brahmanism more deftly blown into nothingness; never, surely, were the "clumsy and the countrified" more nobly nor so much defended as dismissed from the attitude of defense. Never was refined snobbery cloven by a finer and keener sword. Without flattering ignorance, never

pandering to coarseness, the censor extracts from scoffs their sting, and turns it politely, but with an all-penetrating point, upon the scoffers. That which alone constitutes the nobility of democracy is fairly, proudly, and victoriously set against that which alone makes aristocracy ignoble.

I like to think that a woman—little known—has been listening in her "saintly solitude" to the world's voices sounding near and far, loud or low; that in her soul, silently, without aim, thoughts have been revolving, conclusions maturing, convictions deepening, impulse quickening, till all this mental stir found overflow and channel to the world. A book may be an accident. Circumstances, change, a thousand slight modifications of life may prevent the still, small voice from speaking beyond the sphere of home listeners; but it is pleasant to feel that over all the country, unknown to fame or even to society, may be such listeners, such observers, such possible talkers—Girls of the Period, who will keep the Period sweet and bear it well aloft; women who discern and discriminate, and calmly, despite all clamor and heat, deal just judgment, and show us how divine a thing a woman may be made.

At the beginning of our last and greatest revolutionary war, among the thousands of Northern families that rose up, filled and fired with the inspiration of loyalty, was one consisting of father, mother, and three promising sons. The father was smitten with an incurable disease. No strength of his ebbing life could be flung into the breach to stay that destruction which threatened the nation; but not his mortal weakness nor his death-

longing for dear faces should hold back his sons. The youngest was too young; but the oldest was of fit age, a strong, beautiful young man, in the first flush of conscious power, full of enthusiasm, full of hope, high-principled, high-hearted, resolute. Swift and terrible was his soldier's march to the grave. He enlisted in June, 1861, rushed into the foremost of the fight, was taken prisoner by the Rebels, and—for our country's and our countrymen's sake, for our own honor's sake, would we could forget that such things ever happened; but truth is greater than all, and we must remember that he was starved to death in a Rebel prison. To his family—and this was only one among thousands of such families, this fearful event seemed but to call for another soldier. They never dreamed of being daunted, but rose up to a still greater sacrifice. The dead son's place must be made good. The second boy must go. That was the thing to be done, not to be talked about. The boy was ready. The father and mother were not unready. He enlisted, did valiant service till his health entirely failed, was placed on the sick-list till it became evident that he never would be able to do soldier's duty again, when he was finally and honorably discharged. His health and his time he had gladly given to his country, and regretted that he had no more to give; nor did he ever seek reward or recognition.

But now the third and last, the young Benjamin, had grown to be eighteen, stalwart, and brave, and loyal, like his brothers, and the family must be represented in the Army of the Republic. They had sore need of him at home. The slowly dying husband and father, the dis-

abled son, the bereaved mother cleaved longingly and lovingly to this last strong staff of their weakness, but the country's need was sore, and they gave him up, I can not say gladly, but calmly, without complaint or ado, like Americans. While in camp he fell ill with typhoid fever. Those of us who have ever been in the camp hospitals know how dreadful was the situation to a home-and-mother-loving boy, even with all the alleviations which science and love could bring.

In the story-books, proud ladies find their discarded lovers lying wounded and sick, and the situation becomes immediately dramatic and sentimental; but, when I think of these hospitals, I think always of long, dreary rooms full of light, and flies, and smell, and heavy-eyed, suffering men, and the dread and hopelessness of it brood over me after all these years with scarcely a lifting of the shadow. To such a place came the young Benjamin; but there a lady found him, a friend of his mother's, and took him from the hospital to her own house, sent for his mother, and employed her own physician to attend him. This was not exactly field service, but surely no general ever accomplished a desirable end by wiser and more efficient means than this loyal lady. His mother remained with him till he was convalescent, paid all his bills, and as soon as he was able carried him home. There the most skillful physician of the vicinity was engaged; and the moment that gentleman pronounced him well enough to make the journey with safety, his uncle, a member of the House of Representatives, and subsequently an officer in the army, carried him to the Central Hospital at the State

Capitol. There they learned, to their dismay, that *neither of his physicians had reported him*, and consequently he was recorded a *deserter!*

To the still feeble young man this was a terrible blow. To the high, stainless soul, the very breath, the shadow, the thought of shame was intolerable. His agony was acute and intense, but he and his uncle were assured in the strongest terms that his record should be made right, and the latter unhappily departed without seeing in person that the vital thing was done.

Unassured, but undaunted, with only one purpose and one aspiration, to serve and save his country, the young man took his place in the ranks, fought a good fight, won the name at all times and in all places of a good soldier, and laid down his grand young life at last, in the high tide of battle on the decisive field of Gettysburg.

And never in all these years has the cloud been lifted from that noble family. Never did the now widowed mother, never did the heroic son receive aught of pension or pay, for never—oh, crowning grief! was the false record corrected, and he, patriot, hero, martyr, was written down a deserter of the cause to which he had given all!

At last some friendly person took up the matter in behalf of the stricken mother, and after careful investigation learned that the trouble probably had arisen from a mistake in reading for the name of his native village another village four times as far off from headquarters, and at a distance to which it was said he had no right to go, and to which he never did go. This

gentleman wrote to an officer of the Government in Washington, stating the facts, and saying, with a simple trust in the right which Heaven grant our Government may never shame: "Please get the record righted, and communicate the fact to me, and I will at once inform Mrs. ——, who will be much more gratified that her son's name stands right than she will to receive the money due him."

By a little gentle pressure in the right spot, the mighty wheel ceased rolling, the great Government paused, repaired the wrong wrought so long ago, corrected the lying record, lifted the dead soldier's name into the light that should encircle it, and gave to the mourning mother the desire of her heart, the sole solace that remains to her for her beloved and honored dead.

XIII.

## *AUTUMN VOICES.*

THE melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year, when the Old Coal Man starts on his periodical round of travel through the newspapers. Patient and provident housekeepers, whose lives are already a burden to them by reason of the wastefulness of servants, are now, through the precession of the equinoxes, approaching the place where they will be told for the seventy-times-seventieth time that America is the land of extravagance; that our forests are disappearing before the woodman's axe, and our coal-mines hollowing into emptiness beneath the miner's spade; that European families buy wood by the pound, and old coal burns amaist as weel's the new; and if you, sweet Cinderella, will but sift and pick and rinse, smother yourself in ashes, and burrow in your cellar with sufficient assiduity, you will save your country from a fire famine, and doubtless at last reach a point where fresh coal will be no more requisite, but you may burn on and on from a self-supplying bin, forever spent, renewed forever.

Dear and long-suffering Cinderella, be not deceived. Shake the ashes from your hair, scrub off the crock from your poor hands, turn a deaf ear to the wretched man, and while the sun is not yet cold in the heavens, and these birds of ill omen have only piped the first

feeble note of their harsh discord, listen to one who knows more about it than a regiment of newspaper theorists.

Marry come up, now, Old Coal Man, and be yourself sifted! Let us see what is grain and what is chaff in your profuse advice. You give minute, specific, and long-drawn-out directions for the management of range and stove and furnace, by following which the heat shall be regulated, waste prevented, and expenses reduced. In the first place, Old Coal Man, permit me to say, with what "sweetness and light" may be, but at any rate with explicitness, that I, for one, do not half believe you. I speak from the point of sight of a practical experimenter who has spent a large part of his life in coal cellars, who has tried most of the furnaces in this country, and has reflected deeply on the rest. "Leave this little door open," says Father M'Gee, "as soon as your fire is well started, and the coal will last all day." "Put your coal into this cylinder," says the base-burner, "and it feeds itself down as it is wanted, and only as it is wanted, and you need hardly look at your fire from morning to morning." "Spread your old coal on the top of your new coal," says Penny Wise, "and the moderated heat will be all-sufficient." "Slide in this little damper," says Pound Foolish, "and the heat which the world has hitherto dissipated to the skies will be diffused through your house." And with servile fidelity have I shut all the doors, and opened all the registers, and slid all the slides of the furnaces and the funnels thereunto appertaining, and the conclusion of the whole matter is that you can not have fire with-

out fuel. The price of comfort is an eternal supply of coal. If your object is simply to keep a fire alive, you can do so at a very small outlay; but if it is to keep yourself alive through our rigorous Northern winters, I know no way of doing it but to burn out your bins.

Granting, however, that you have found a royal road to warmth, does it certainly follow that it would be worth our while to travel it? Even supposing your directions, if complied with, would reduce the consumption of coal, is it at all certain that they would not require the consumption of something more valuable than coal? For in this world, at least in this part of it, one can live rationally only by a comparison of values. Our servants mostly know how to make coal fires. Very likely they do it after a clumsy and costly fashion, and keep up their fires by an unwise and unnecessary method. The good housekeeper instructs them in the more excellent way, but, unless she constantly ministers at the altar herself, the probability is that the flame will immediately return to its costliest sacrifice, and lap up far more than its legitimate food. The good housekeeper knows this—has a constant, aching sense of it; but her husband, her children, her house, her books, her friends, make incessant demands upon her time, and, after a few strenuous efforts on her part, Providence mercifully vouchsafes to her a life-preserving apathy, broken only by an occasional pang when she catches a glimpse of the rapidly lowering coal bin and the rapidly heightening coal bills. And just at this moment of all moments, when we might have peace, you, miserable, must needs come clattering in

with your deafening din of old coal and economy, and relegate every thing to uneasiness, not to say remorse. Away with you! What bee is this in your bonnet, making all the world uncomfortable? Do you mean to tell Cinderella that it would be more economical for her to tend her fires and save her coal than to tend her children and save her soul? What shall it profit a woman if she gain all the mines of Lehigh, and lose her own tranquillity of temper? Whether is it better to pay a few additional dollars each year, or to pay out your time and patience each day in pawing over a heap of ashes? For this is what it amounts to. It is not, in most cases, a question between careless and careful supervision, between wanton recklessness and wise prudence, between a conscientious and an unprincipled woman. It is whether a scrupulous Christian, an already overburdened wife and mother, shall neglect still more than she now is forced to do the weightier matters of the law, and give her attention to paying, with accuracy and promptness, the tithes of mint, anise, and cummin.

Beyond the obligation which we are all under to require, so far as practicable, thorough work from our workmen, and to give faithful service to our employers, that it is a great deal wiser and more economical to let the fire consume a little extra coal than it is to throw our own peace of mind into it for the sake of keeping it down. Waste is hateful to God and man; but if waste there must be, let it be of the cheaper and not the costlier material. The worst waste is the waste of the better in pursuit of the meaner. Life is more than anthracite, and the body than seasoned oak.

To hold up foreign ways against ours is utterly futile. Europe has little coal and much people. We have wide-stretching coal-fields and a sparse population. A woman with a dozen servants to do the dozen different kinds of work can perhaps afford to burn a cinder a dozen times over before calling it ashes. But our women, having much of the hand-work and most of the brain-work to do themselves, must discriminate between the duties that can be delegated and those that can not. Surely, with our immense coal-mines stored up for generations, and our society still crude, and our children who can not wait, the choice of duties is not difficult. Is she a wise and economical woman who, when her children ask for stories, for pleasant talk, for a sweet-faced, gentle-voiced mother, holds out to them, in grimy hands, a bit of bitumen?

And when you present European economics for our emulation, what do you mean? That we shall be benefited by compassing their results? Look at some of these economical Continental firesides close at hand:

"Keeping no fire within doors," says Hawthorne, "except possibly a spark or two in the kitchen; they [the Romans] crept out of their cheerless houses into the narrow, sunless, sepulchral streets, bringing the firesides along with them in the shape of little earthen pots, vases, or pipkins, full of lighted charcoal or warm ashes, over which they hold their tingling finger-ends. .... Through the open door-ways—no need to shut them when the weather within was bleaker than without—a glimpse into the interior of their dwellings showed the uncarpeted brick floors, as dismal as the

pavement of a tomb..... In New England, or in Russia, or scarcely in a hut of the Esquimaux, there is no such discomfort to be borne as by Romans in wintry weather..... Wherever we pass our summers, may all our inclement months, from November to April, henceforth be spent in some country that recognizes winter as an integral portion of its year!"

Is this a pleasing picture to contemplate? Would the Old Coal Man like to exchange our extravagant hearth-stones and furnaces for the snug, saving fire-pot on a Roman sidewalk? Or shall the fire continue to roar, somewhat superfluously perhaps, yet with a heartsome and hospitable glow withal?

Your dissolving views of our forests and our mines are not in the least appalling. God will not leave his world out in the cold until its appointed time is come, and that day will not be postponed though we spend our lives in piling wood. Coal came into use long before wood gave out; and by the time we get to the end of our coal-mines, ocean, air, and sunshine will be ready to give up the heat which is in them for our cheer. Oil-wells spouted long before whales had ceased to spout. We had been bemoaning our droughts, lo! these many years, and wise men of the East said it was because we had so ruthlessly felled our forests, and, unless we planted trees again, seed-time and harvest would fail for want of rain. Then came a most beautiful and bountiful summer, filled our tanks and cisterns, fed our fountains, flooded our meadows, drowned our cranberries, washed out our salt hay, and soaked our rowen into mulch, and how can our *savants* keep their heads

above water? For some reason, we were told, the climate of the earth was changing—glacial cold was coming upon us, and the earth was gradually freezing down from the north pole. Now if any there be who have not felt this theory thoroughly thawed out of them by the fervent heat of our all too swiftly flown midsummer months, let him hear what Daniel Draper saith from his eyrie in the Central Park of the Universe. After a careful comparison of the most reliable records for the past seventy-six years, he comes to the conclusion that, "both as regards rain-fall and winter climate, there has been no change in the lapse of many years."

Surcease, Old Coal Man, your evil speaking and causeless whining. Our mines of coal shall not waste nor our wells of oil fail till the day that the Lord revealeth something else in the earth to burn. Meanwhile, come down into our ash-heap, if you will, and claw among the clinkers to your heart's content. There are plenty of them, and slate to be had for the asking, and doubtless soot as the sands of the sea; or descend betimes to your own furnace shrine, and win your own household down by your merry morning song:

> "Come into the cellar, Maud,
> For the black bat, night, has flown;
> Come into the cellar, Maud—
> It's poky down here alone,
> And the fumes of the coal gas are wafted abroad,
> And the fire is almost gone."

But for Maud herself, and for all busy and virtuous women, Heaven grant them grace never to believe that any necromancy or machinations whatever can make in

our ashes glow their wonted fires, and firmness to stay above-ground and keep the world sane and sweet!

Sometimes it seems as disastrous to be a good housekeeper as a poor one. It *is* just as bad to be a better housekeeper than there is any call for, as it is to be a poorer housekeeper than there is any justification for. There are plenty to exact perfection in all household machinery. If I could induce women to be willing to be poor housekeepers when, through their poverty, life could be made rich, I should feel that I had not lived in vain.

There are, no doubt, reckless, brainless, wasteful, unprincipled women who bring ruin into a man's heart and home. Such women need no exhortation to a wise negligence, nor, indeed, can they profit by exhortation to wise thrift. It is of no use to admonish them one way or the other. They may extract, even from moral words, encouragement for their folly; but they would be foolish just the same, whether they had encouragement or not. There is nothing to be done with them but to make the most you can of this life, notwithstanding the wounds they deal, and to look forward with hope to a fresh start in another and a better world. But these women are a small minority. Female America is, in the main, conscientious, disposed to be frugal, and to do its full part in building up the family fortunes. To my observation, women err through being too careful and troubled about many things, rather than in not being careful and "particular" enough. They look too well to the ways of their household, and do not eat so much of the bread of idleness as would be

good for them. They need to be encouraged to "let things go," rather than be exhorted to "look after things." When some troubled teacher tells us that a French family will live luxuriously and keep boarders off what an American family throws away, patient Griselda feels admonished to renewed and still more scrutinizing pursuit of every morsel of meat from the moment when it leaves the butcher's stall till it is set on her overflowing table; nor even thence shall the *disjecta membra* be permitted to depart in peace, but must be followed to their final classification and deposit in the frying-pan or soap jar, lest some atom be prematurely deflected to pig-pen or poultry-yard, and so the harmony of the universe disturbed.

But the overwhelming probability is that Griselda already gives quite its due share of time and thought to the salvage of scraps. She may or may not make as much out of a shin-bone as a Frenchwoman would; but in our happy country shin-bones are many and sirloin steaks not few, and it is a question whether energy and ingenuity may not be better expended than in wresting the last fibre of nutriment from a dismantled bone. *Must* is a word from which there is no appeal; but where there is freedom of choice, let us remember the great army of dogs and cats which is glad to feed upon the crumbs that fall from our tables; and if the manipulation of fragments into viands seems likely to cost more than it would come to, let us not be deterred from comforting our dumb brethren therewith by any fears of foreign comparisons.

Economy is a divine law. No amount of wealth jus-

tifies waste. A man can never be so rich as to afford wanton expenditure. The "man of means" is under just as strong bonds to spend his money wisely as the man of "limited income." All the teaching that a woman can give her servants she ought to give them, for their sake and her own. They touch her sphere, and she is responsible for all the good she can do them. But it is not her duty to sacrifice to their teaching a higher good. She has duties more strenuous than inculcating economy, far more strenuous, in most cases, than the saving of money. To economize at the cost of making her family uncomfortable, or of destroying the elasticity of her mind and the buoyancy of her spirits with the burden of details, is not thrifty.

Nature is sometimes prodigiously wasteful, to all appearance, yet she is strictly economical, since not only is no force and no substance really lost, but the seemingly extravagant expenditure is really the smallest that would certainly secure the desired end. Myriads of blossoms bear no fruit, but they gladden the eye, and, on the whole, making all provision for failures, there are, doubtless, no more than are necessary to keep up the supply. Nature surely believes that a large margin is the truest economy.

Flies are not a desirable adjunct to housekeeping, and the ideal housekeeper will set her face like a flint against them, regardless of my innocent remarks. Nor have I the smallest sympathy with that misplaced masculine tender-heartedness which forbids the use of the sticky fly-traps because they make the fly uncomfortable, or the poison-paper because it disagrees with the

fly's constitution. When a fly comes into human habitation, he takes his life in his hands, and if fate swiftly takes it out again, that is his own affair. But why should we make more ado to put the fly out than he makes by coming in? Why should the sweep of his wings in parlor or dining-room be the signal for a sudden pause in talk, a rush for towels, a vigorous onslaught, and a vindictive slaughter? Extreme fastidiousness is a greater nuisance than flies. There are women who ought to be bound over to keep the peace. Domestic happiness, social order, and the whole fabric of civilized life ought not to be at the mercy of a fly; and since you can not always catch the fly, there is nothing for it but to catch the women. When I see people devoting their minds to, and disturbing the universe for, the expulsion of a harmless wandering wayfarer, I am moved to say that I like flies. They are a busy and a cheery folk, well worthy of study, and capable of rewarding an intelligent curiosity. I remember once spending a whole Sunday afternoon in watching one with great interest, and, I trust, not without profit. How could Mr. Theodore Tilton have written that charming lyric, beginning,

> "Baby Bye,
> Here's a fly:
> Let us watch him, you and I,"

if a rigid domestic discipline had been brought to bear on the immortal little guest the moment he appeared in sight? Certainly it was with a positive satisfaction that I perceived one day on what a friendly footing stood the flies with a certain agreeable and refined fam-

ily of my acquaintance. The windows were thrown wide open, and with the scent of honeysuckle and the song of birds came in, too, the busy, contented, preoccupied tribe, adding their blithe buzz to the summer's infinite harmony. It bespoke a large and lavish hospitality, a generous sympathy, a unison with nature, a freedom from petty and deteriorating anxieties which promises well for the future and the humanities.

The world is full of wasps. There are four crawling over the window-shade, half a dozen more sunning themselves on the glass, two or three creeping out of the curtain folds. In fact, you can not stir any thing without disturbing a wasp. Outdoors their buzz is incessant. The sunny south angle is alive with their fussing and fuming. Where they lodge no one can find out. This morning, behind a closed south blind, a colony of them was found hanging to the window-sash outside. They were gathered in a close cluster, as if they had clubbed together to keep warm; and perhaps they had, for they seem to be a slow, cold-blooded race. A fly is swift, active, continually busy. He moves as if he had an object in life, as if he had taken out a contract, and were paid by the job; but a wasp crawls around sluggishly, as if he were not going anywhere in particular, and did not much care whether he got there or not. So he stops midway, and tries to start up his torpid liver by a sun-bath; but midway is far from being the safe way for him. It is just there, reflective and immovable, that the newspaper or the wet towel comes slap down on him like a thousand avalanches;

and it is only when the newspaper and wet towel have missed fire, have startled without stunning him, that he shows any agility in walking. With such incentives to exertion, I have seen a wasp in a hurry, tiptoeing frantically along, with wings upstretched, like Blondin on his tight rope; but ordinarily he comes as Lady Geraldine went to Mr. Bertram after he had half recovered from his dead faint,

"Ever, ever more the while in a slow silence."

Wasps have the credit or discredit of being an irritable race, stinging on the slightest provocation. That may be, but our wasps are evidently a better-bred species, as they have stung no one yet, though they have had every excuse for doing so. Wet cloths have been slung at them, death has menaced them at the brush end of the broom, scalding water has been the slightest of their provocations, the duster has restricted them to the dust-pan till the burning fiery furnace ingulfed them to a swift and, we trust, an almost painless departure from a terrified world, yet through it all they have never pushed one sting. But as the poor invalid, who was woefully disturbed by the cock crowing, remarked to chanticleer's owner, who affirmed that he never crowed more than half a dozen times of a morning, "You think of what I suffer when he crows; you do not count what I suffer from the feeling that he is going to crow!"—as Prescott, the historian, says of the reign of terror in the Netherlands under the Inquisition and Philip II., "The amount of suffering from such a persecution is not to be estimated merely by the number of those who have

actually suffered death, when the fear of death hung like a naked sword over every man's head;" so the reason why wasps are a nuisance is not the amount of physical pain but mental discomfort that they cause you. As in monetary circles, they create a panic by destroying confidence. So while the busy, friendly flies we poison with sugared water, tenderly, as if we loved them, at the wasps, equally harmless, but with harmful possibilities, we go out as against a foe, with deadly weapons and fierce, relentless hostility.

The gravel-walk before the front door has been honey-combed with holes, some of which on investigation proved to be three or four inches deep—as deep as the point of your sun-umbrella. A little winged beast, black and vermilion, with two curved sickles on his head, made the holes by vigorous digging. What was the name of the little horned beast, or what he was up to, I do not know, not being sufficiently well-read in natural history; but he spent a good deal of time in the hole, and seemed to be very busy when he was out of it. I watched several days. Had there been but a single pair, I should have perhaps eclipsed Thoreau for waiting, and Pliny for discovering, but they came in hordes; they seemed determined to monopolize the walk. Every time you stepped out-of-doors the air was alive and angry with a swarm of spiteful, vicious, vermilion little vixens buzzing about your ears. So one sunny morning I sat on the door-step, and as soon as a fiery imp went down into his gallery I poked the gravel on him with my parasol, till every house within reach had caved in. The others somehow got wind of

it, and they all went away. If they are an absolutely harmless tribe, I am sorry I did it, but no doubt there are plenty more, and they must learn to colonize on land that has not already been pre-empted.

Resting on a rock by the road-side one afternoon, we noticed a little fellow something like a beetle, but apparently not a beetle, digging away for dear life. He was making a hole, and he worked at it with a very comical energy. His slender little claws—antennæ, or whatever you call them—made the dirt fly, and when the heap was so large as to obstruct the entrance to his gallery, he leveled it with admirable swiftness and skill. Sometimes he went in head first and pawed, and sometimes he went in tail first and shoved. The size of the pebbles which he lugged out was surprising—one you could not get into a number seven thimble—and the persistence with which he tugged and toiled over his load was amazing. When the gallery was apparently finished he flew away. Soon a wriggling was observed in the grass two or three yards off, and there appeared our bonnie bug riding a big brown locust three or four times as long as himself. This locust proved, however, to be dead or very much demoralized. The bug was striding his neck, and dragging him along by main force. When within a foot and a half of the cavern the bug left the locust, ran forward and examined the hole, trotted back and forth several times between the two, evidently taking measurements with his eye, made the excavation a little deeper, dragged up the locust to his grave, tilted him over the edge, and shot him in head-foremost! As he did not at once wholly disap-

pear, the bug leaped in himself, dragged him down, then climbed out, shoveled in the dirt upon him, leaped in after it, and trod it all down snug and close around every part, till, by a laborious process, the hole was completely and compactly filled, the heap of gravel leveled, and no sign left of the burial but a patch of fresh earth. If I could have stayed a little longer, I suppose I should have seen him put up a head-stone with an epitaph, but I was obliged to go. It was as interesting a display of skill, persistence, and activity as one often witnesses; and I should very much like to know whether it was a foe that he was burying, or food that he was salting down for winter.

Some pestilent fellows lately prostituted our agricultural fairs to the promotion of patches by promising premiums to the best mender. And there were not wanting foolish virgins to come forward and compete for the prize. Now I do not mean to say that a patch may not sometimes be requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul; but there is a great deal of darning and patching and mending beyond what is wholesome. Women will sometimes darn stockings which, as stockings, had no right to further existence. True economy would have put the feet into the rag-bag and sewed up the legs into dishcloths; and to see a human being, capable of love and hope and memory and judgment, turn away from this great, beautiful world, and all the stir and thrill of multiform life, and give itself to driving a stupid little steel crow-bar back and forth through a yawning heel and a dilapidated toe when whole stockings can be bought at forty cents a

pair, is melancholy, not to say exasperating. We are not bugs.

> "A little darning now and then
> Is relished by the best of men;"

and there is a nervous irritation which is allayed by a short and solitary turn at the needle, and there are accidents and incidents which demand a stitch, and which no right-minded woman will refuse; but a protracted and repeated darning—a darning on principle and from choice, a premeditated and vainglorious prostration before the shrine of this little one-eyed despot—is a sight for gods and men to weep over, not hold out prizes to!

I say again, if a woman must, she must, and that is the end of it; but she often thinks she must when she need not. She often darns and mends and makes over what it would be cheaper to throw away—infinitely cheaper, as regards time and patience and happiness, which are real values—and not dearer in respect of money, which only represents value.

Patient Griselda, do not let your patience—which in right measure and for right purposes is a divine virtue—degenerate into meanness of spirit, insipidity of mind, poverty of resources, and acquiescence in what is not inevitable. Life is short, and its issues mighty; and there are things which ought to be done with painstaking, and things that ought to be done slightly, and things that ought not to be done at all. She is the wise woman and the thrifty housekeeper who accurately discriminates and intelligently chooses the good part which shall not be taken away from her.

## XIV.

## *ON SOCIAL FORMULA AND SOCIAL FREEDOM.*

Why should we be creatures of formula, and not of philosophy? There is a reason under every rule, if we would only take the trouble to think it out; and we should thereby save ourselves the trouble of remembering the rule, and other people the trouble arising from our forgetting it. Grammar is not an invention. It is only a classification of usages. The nominative case governs the verb in number and person, not because some Lindley Murray put on a crown and sceptre and said it should, but because he found that when respectable people talk it always does. The rules which regulate parliamentary organization and debate seem to be involved, arbitrary, and technical; but a close investigation, a thoughtful analysis, a *reductio ad absurdum*, shows that they are not woven of red tape, but are laid down each one for a definite purpose, and that purpose is, without exception, a right and righteous one. This rule is to prevent a factious minority from wasting the time in useless delay. That is to prevent a powerful and successful majority from overriding the rights of the minority. If you study the rules as some students learn geometry, by main force of remembering that the angle A C D is contained by the sides A C, C D, you are in a labyrinth at once. But if you look at the reasons

for the rules, you have a thread to guide you out, even when you do not quite see the path in which you are to walk. You can be a rule unto yourself. No man —nay, in view of the possibilities of our politics, let us say no woman—can be a good parliamentarian unless she reads between the lines, and sees that laws are necessary and effective, as well as that they are.

I hope this is a sufficiently learned preamble to my lecture, and will strike terror into those culprits for whom it is written—those unthinking, vexatious people who fail to answer your letters because you did not give them your address! They are the people who will never succeed in Congress, because they will be tripped up instead of helped on by the rules. They will accomplish little as doctors, because, when bleeding and warm water fails, all they can do is draw more blood and administer more warm water. They will be wretched country dwellers, because they must have the regulation quantity of straw or they can never make bricks; whereas the ordinary routine of country life is the steady production of bricks without straw, making without machinery, and mending without tools.

"Did not give the address." But may not the Chief-justice of the United States Supreme Court be assumed to know something? If no State is named in the date of your letter, is it not always understood that you are in the same State with the person addressed? If no town or city is named, is it not also because you are in the same with your correspondent? By a parity of reasoning, does not the date of a letter always involve the address of the person writing it, unless some other ad-

dress be given? Or must a man append to his date the statement, "This is where I am?" No. If you date your letter at Yonkers, New York, and desire an immediate answer, the whole duty of the man to whom you write is to send you an answer to Yonkers, New York. If, in the mean while, you have gone to Omaha, or if your letters need to be sent to Washington Street, No. 1872, and you have failed to give directions to that end, your blood be on your own head; but let the answer go to Yonkers.

There is another epistolary sin, of sad import to country-folk. My dinner is spoiled, my beefsteak with stuffing, my snow-pudding, and all my tid-bits must waste their sweetness because my expected guest did not give me her full address, and has probably not received my summons. She had given it in her previous letter, which letter, being answered, was immediately deposited in the waste-basket; and the last letter gave only the name of the great city in which she, a pilgrim and a stranger, was to tarry for a few nights. Whereupon I, the philosopher and parliamentarian, lay down in addition to

RULE 1. *For the person addressed.*—The date of a letter involves the address of its writer.

RULE 2. *For the person writing.*—Let the date of *every* letter involve the address of the reply.

Otherwise we must carry upon our backs a burden of old letters, or in our brains a heavier burden of streets and numbers. And why should you make my rustic brain remember No. 879,563 East Ninety-ninth Street, between Chester Square and Madison Avenue,

when I am already overwhelmed with the effort to remember to direct my workmen to put a transom window over the bath-room door, and two funnel holes in the chimney, and a scroll on the portico pillar, and make the cistern ten feet deep, and shut up the chickens every night? Just date your letter, and save to a wretched life one item.

Revolving these views in my mind, as used Æneas and Dido in our school-days, the dinner is eaten and removed, Malone is departed to the society of her swains, and I sit with "Thackeray" in the twilight, when, sudden and shame-faced, in comes my guest! I am divided between welcome and consternation. Here, after all, is the fair, sweet face I longed for; but there, alas! is the empty table; and where is the absent maid? where is the savory steak? where the extraordinary pudding and the coagulated gravy—where?

"So you did get my letter in spite of the lack of street and number?"

"Yes, it came duly; but I misunderstood the directions. You said the four o'clock train, and I thought you meant our four o'clock train, which I took; and it dropped me on the way, not being a through train."

"Oh," I moan, "I meant the train that reaches *us* at four o'clock," and foresee the tables turned on myself, and disgrace impending, for Hassan the Turk ever avows that the four o'clock train is the train that leaves the Hub of the Universe at four o'clock, entirely irrespective of the time it whistles along to any station on the spokes or rim. But I maintain that the centre of the universe for me is where I am. Why must I leave my

shepherd's crook, humble though it be, and travel to the great cities to assume a railway train? I know not when it leaves Boston or New York, or whether it leaves them at all. I do know when it reaches me, and of that I testify, yea, and will testify.

"Yes," says Hassan the Turk. "You would no longer have longitude reckoned from Greenwich and latitude from the equator, but every man should reckon from the centre of his own dining-room, which would simplify navigation. Learn to look at the principles of things, and not simply at the incident which lies next to your hand."

But I am the philosopher, not the philosophee, and shall I be tamely hoist with my own petard?

I am not confident about that four o'clock train. But I know I bear a grudge against it for giving my guest a cold dinner.

I am next day smitten with a desire to see you, my intimate friend—a desire so irresistible that I take the train and an hour's journey for the purpose, and must take the return train home in another hour. You are equally desirous to see me, and for fifteen minutes we unfold our budget unmolested; but by the time our intellectual wares are unpacked and well scattered, the doorbell rings, and up come the cards of Mrs. A and Miss B.

"Oh!" say you, trying to smother an inhospitable exclamation of disappointment into an innocent exclamation of surprise.

"Oh!" say I, in outspoken disappointment, for it is no house of mine, and I am not under bonds to be hospitable. "Can't you do something?"

A sensible and practical suggestion; but what you do is to go down and see the excellent Mrs. A and Miss B, and I sit alone and reflect that there is no freedom in our social life. And there never will be any. And there never can be any. And we get on very comfortably without it. Only it is pleasant to rattle our chains once in a while, and hold up the links to look through them, and let it be understood that we know we wear them, and are not living in a mistaken belief that we are free. Mr. Henry Rogers, in his charming "Greyson Letters," shows a very lively sense of the existing state of things. He sees there is no possibility of any different social status in this world, and is very careful to locate his reform in the next. Even in heaven he considers that the angels will sometimes bore each other; but it is only in heaven that the angel who sings you the 119th Psalm without stopping, and then begins again, may be actually hushed up at the hundredth stanza without his taking offense at it! In another and a better world, but never in this, may we accomplish such a feat.

For, look you, Mrs. A and Miss B are your town folk, who can visit you at any time on the supposition that they really want to see you. But they do not want to see you. If they had come to the door and been told that you were out, not a pang would have rent their hearts; not a shade of sorrow would have saddened their faces. They would have communed with each other on departing, "Well, we have made our call, and have gained time enough to call on Mrs. C. Really, we are in luck to-day."

Does this argue false friendship on the part of those

estimable women? Not the least in the world. Undoubtedly they esteem you very highly in love for your work's sake. They are quite devoid of any hostility toward you, or any want of faith in your integrity. If you are sick, they will inquire for you with real and warm interest, will send you flowers and oranges and exquisite tid-bits, which your soul loathes and your children devour; but as for seeing you at any special time or at any special interval, their hearts are in no wise bent on it. And you equally were not particularly desirous of seeing them, and you were desirous of seeing me, let us assume. If, now, you were in another and a better world, you would say to them,

"My friend is here for a short time, and we wish much to have a little talk together. You can come any time; so just you go away now." And the lovely ladies being, under the circumstances, all sorts of angels, would stretch their white wings and soar away to some other of the many mansions as sweetly as if they had been let in to yours.

But try that heavenly etiquette in this world, and you would soon have very few callers to try it on. Your friends would smile suavely, and say, "Oh, certainly; I would not interrupt you on any account."

And as soon as the front gate clicked behind them, one would say to the other, "*Wasn't* that cool?" and the other would reply, "I should rather think so."

And, without entering into any formal pact, they would mutually agree that you would not have the opportunity to refuse them again for *one* while!

And the beauty of it is, that you would feel and do

precisely the same were you in their place, and so would I. Nobody will often visit at houses where they tell him, in so many words, that they would rather see some one else. That is what it amounts to. No matter how delicately the preference may be decorated, it is still a preference, and we do not wish to go where we are not wanted, not we!

It is because you well know this that you leave me, and descend into the parlor to your neighbors, and between you you dig out a half of the hour that in the nature of things belongs to me, and fill up the whole with unnecessary chat about the society, and the picnic, and the sick people; all of which means only that you still continue to be friendly, and not hostile, which is much, I grant. But the ladies are no more assured of it, and no more satisfied in the consciousness of diminishing their list of calls by one, than they would be if you had been absent. You are inwardly impatient to see me, whose time is short, and you fret a double quantity because you know I am impatient. As for me, I walk up and down the room, and look at the clock, and grow wroth without reason, for nobody is to blame. We are all good citizens, doing our social duty, and doing it in the only way it can be done, or will be done, until our wings are grown.

In communities where these things are reduced to a system, "not at home" comes into play to great advantage. Some persons have constitutional objections to this formula when it is used to express what the words by themselves do not imply. But that view is merely superficial. You are not telling the truth, they say,

Well, you do not want to tell it. But you are telling a falsehood. Not at all. The phrase has a technical and perfectly understood sense. You send out cards, saying that you will be "at home" on such a day. According to this theory, the cards are an impertinence. What do the card-receivers care whether you are at home or not? The significance of the announcement is that you wish them to be at your home with you. And the significance of the other statement is that you do not wish them to be at home with you. Why not say so, then? Because human nature is so sensitive a thing that it can not bear much, and we have to guard it at all points. The "not at home" leaves every thing in a delightful dubiety. You may be actually away; we can, at least, always flatter our self-love that you are away, and we feel better in consequence.

And you, my friend, who are such a stickler for the truth, would be the first to take offense if we told you the truth. Blessings on the man or woman who invented this nice little short-cut to our convenience without crossing our self-love!

But in country communities where this formula is not adopted, and where the words, therefore, would be false, there is nothing for it but to "face the music" at any inconvenience, or

> "Run and deposit
> Yourself in a closet,"

and listen to Malone slamming and calling through the house in a vain show, and enact the following dialogue when you present yourself at dinner:

MALONE. "An' indade, mum, I did not know you was out."

YOURSELF (I adopt the method of the old tract dialogues between "Yourself" and "A Sinner"). "I have not been out, Malone."

MALONE. "Why, sure, mum, Mrs. A and Miss B was here, an' I tould them you was in, an' fetched 'em in, and couldn't find you at all."

YOURSELF (*benignly*). "Never mind, Malone, I shall have opportunity to see them again soon."

Either mode, as Macaulay said of torture, has its advantages. But perhaps neither is wholly free from disadvantages.

In the country, however, where callers are few and distances long, it is a very great inconvenience indeed which can justify us in turning away a visitor from the door, or, still more, in turning away a visitor after she is within doors.

There are visits which remain in our memories as bright spots in life, and there are visits whose only pleasure is that they are over. But visiting ought always to be pleasant—pleasant to both giver and receiver.

One of the best things connected with keeping house is the freedom to receive one's friends. Many a newly married couple, many a small family without children, could board with far less care and expense than housekeeping costs them, and with almost equal comfort. Nor need housekeeping be confined to married people, or to those whom God hath set in families. Why do not the solitary set themselves in families? Few women ever think of keeping house and making a home for

themselves and a centre of social life for their circle unless they are married. Of course it is a great deal easier to set up and keep up an establishment with a man at the fore—if he is the right sort of man. The right sort of man is one who knows instinctively when to be an active partner and when to be a silent partner; who goes to the front when there is money to be earned for the home, and to the rear when it is to be spent; who provides and enjoys a bountiful table, but is sweet-tempered, cheerful, and consoling in an emergency; who is main-stay and head centre of the family, but who shows it only in constant providence and tender watchfulness —a man of whose comfort and taste every one else thinks first, but who thinks of it himself least and last. Such a man is a real help in housekeeping. But suppose a man is ignorant or incapable, has small knack in getting on, never is suited with his situation, but leaves a good one in search of a better, and finds none; refuses a salary of a thousand a year because his "family can't live on a thousand dollars," and so they live on nothing; does not know what to do with money when he gets it, but fritters it away in trifling expenditures and foolish investments, while his family lack comfort in the present and security for the future; or suppose he is thrifty but fretful, exacting, imperious, capricious, selfish — *is* he a help over the hard places in housekeeping? If a man can, in case of distress, put on a door-knob, mend a broken pane of glass, hang a picture, tack down a carpet, entertain a guest, eat stale bread and like it when the stove would not draw and the biscuit will not bake, he is pleasant to have about, and far better than no-

body; but the chances are large that he can not mend the knob, and will forget to call a carpenter, and may lower over the "slim breakfast;" so that his failure to put in an appearance need not be fatal to an establishment. But if a girl is left, the one ungathered rose upon the family tree, she goes to live with her married sister or brother, and, ten to one, becomes merged in the family, and presently loses all distinct individuality of position or influence.

So the teachers in a city, and the clerks and the shop-girls, and all unmarried and self-supporting or independent women, live in boarding-houses or in families, often finding it difficult to secure an agreeable home, and often dwelling in a place and a manner that preclude every idea of home, and really deprive them of a large part of the social power to which their character and ability entitle them.

Suppose, now, four young gentlewomen who have been left each with a slender income, quite insufficient for *gentle* housekeeping, but sufficient for a respectable maintenance in the proffered home of a brother or brother-in-law, without further help from him than such proffer affords. Suppose that, instead of accepting these offers and becoming superfluous members of other families—assistants possibly, but not indispensable, and always subordinate—these four should unite their forces. Four insufficient incomes may combine into one sufficient not only for comfort, but for elegance. The cost of housekeeping for four women is very far from being four times the cost of housekeeping for one. In many respects it would not be perceptibly increased.

One woman, for instance, would need one servant; and by distributing the light and agreeable but time-and-care-needing parts of the house-work among themselves, four women could do perfectly well with one servant. Even their association can be so guarded that there shall be no necessity for undue or undesired intimacy, and liking shall be its only measure. Each one's share of superintendence and service can be rigidly prescribed and observed. The dining-room and parlor are the only common ground. In their own rooms they are as secluded and supreme as if their souls were like stars, and dwelt apart. In the drawing-room they are harmonious and hospitable. To the outside world they are householders, a family, a unit. They may receive and entertain; they have standing, a local habitation, and a name. To themselves they are themselves—free, self-possessed, self-acting. It needs only a certain power of adaptation—a certain similarity, or rather harmony, of taste and purpose—to begin with, and then a moderate amount of Christian forbearance, of intelligent allowance, and, above all, scrupulous and invariable good-breeding. But there is no situation in life in which good-breeding is not indispensable to happiness and character; while in point of forbearance and adaptation they would not need to exercise half as much as if they were married. The strain upon patience and temper would be far less than in marriage; and though, justly enough, the happiness arising from the alliance might be less intense and perfect, it would be far greater than from a tame and spiritless life of perpetual subordination or perpetual self-denial.

Or suppose the four gentlewomen supplement or supply their income by teaching or by some form of remunerative work. Each earns five hundred dollars a year. Five hundred dollars a year would keep no house, but four five hundreds would keep one respectably and comfortably. By systematic arrangement, four friends, one would think, might live together in a coziness and even a luxury unattainable at any boarding-house which their means could command, with a pride of self-direction and independence which would be impossible for them in any other family, and at a cost really less than their united expenses in a separate life. They would purchase comfort and supervision at a less price than discomfort and subordination. They would spend their money for exactly what they wanted, and of whatever economy they chose to exercise themselves would reap the fruits.

But the boarder is dependent upon the will and convenience of others. He can not invite his friends to come and spend a week with him without consulting the capabilities, or depending for welcome upon the disposition, of some other host than himself. This puts him in an attitude not wholly dignified—not that which a mature person, man or woman, would naturally choose to maintain. The householder is monarch of all he surveys, and invites at his own sweet will. If he meets an old friend suddenly in the street, if she learns by chance that a former school-mate is in the neighborhood, there are no outside authorities to consult, no whims or moods of a landlady to consider. Forth from the warm welcoming heart goes the invitation, and the fatted calf

walks to the block at once, knowing that his hour is come.

This theoretically; yet practically the hospitality of householders sometimes seems as really hedged in as if they were but inmates of a stranger's house. People who are hospitable at heart, thoroughly friendly and well disposed, do yet make such a burden of hospitality that one wonders how they can find any pleasure in it. This is a great pity, for the exchange of visits ought to be what it is capable of being, one of the great pleasures of life, a rest, a refreshment, an incentive, not a burden.

But to render it so we need not follow the rules laid down in the books, to divest receptions of their terror by being always ready to receive. Is it Ruskin, or Eastlake, or Launcelot, or another, who condemns extension-tables on the ground that your table should be equally large at all times, to indicate that you are always ready for your friends? Go to, Eastlake and Launcelot! Sincerity is the watch-word of the new dispensation. We must have the supports of our brackets visible, and the chair-legs as palpably as they are really and as really as they are palpably firm; but if the table is to indicate that we are always ready for our friend, the table becomes at once a piece of household artfulness and not of household art, for we are not at all times equally ready. Honesty in life must precede honesty in furniture. We need not direct our efforts to being always ready to see friends, but we could do much in the way of trying not to be disturbed by their coming when we are not ready. If Serena could have her own way, she would prefer Celestia's

call to be in the afternoon, when the midday meal is over, the dishes are washed and removed, and Serena is calmly reposing in tidy dress and comparative leisure. But if Celestia must leave town by the noon train, and runs in by ten o'clock in the morning, when Serena is trimming the lamps, and there is much odor of petroleum in the air, and Serena's fingers are not wholesome to Celestia's gloves, shall Serena be dismayed and apologize and mentally regret that she is always "caught in the suds?" Not the least in the world, if she is a sensible and friendly woman. If it is the proper time for her to be cleaning lamps, and she is in a garb proper to a lamp-cleaner, she has no call to be disturbed though the Queen of England, in crown and sceptre, should pay her a morning visit. She should not consider herself as "caught in the suds," or as caught at all. She is in the suds of her own free-will and by the fore-ordination of Heaven, and if "Heaven itself should stoop to her," it ought to find her nowhere else at that hour. It would be very unbecoming that she should be trimming her lamps in a silk gown in the front parlor. Why not be entirely frank and at ease, and if her work be pressing, bid Celestia to a safe seat by the kitchen fire, or if she can conveniently go off duty for a while, take her pleasant chat to the pleasant parlor?

So far from its being necessary to be always ready for company, it is one of the pleasures of housekeeping to prepare for company. Sweeping and dusting are but dull drudgery when cleanliness is the only object; but how pleasant it is to "tidy" the rooms when a houseful of guests are coming at the end of it! There is an

incentive worthy of toil—that transmutes toil into delight. But suppose you have been ill, or the children have had scarlet fever, or Norah is gone, and there is a chance for a visit from a friend. Must you send her away? Yes, if you absolutely can not undertake the slight addition to your work which her visit necessitates. But remember her visit does not necessitate that you should go through house-cleaning previous to her appearance. Suppose the doors are finger-marked, and the windows not faultlessly clean, and the guest-chamber has not been swept for a month, the doors will open, and the windows will let in fresh air, and you and your friend can get immense draughts of satisfaction out of the visit, though things are not as you would so gladly have them, if you will only not fret about them, but consign them to the insignificance they merit. We are afraid of each other, forgetting that our friends have the same kind of experiences that we have. The most thorough of housekeepers is sometimes forced to "let things go," unless she sacrifices something of more importance than "things." Serena is distressed because the afternoon sun reveals to her responsible eyes a little dust under the sofa. But Celestia is equally distressed because her student-lamp suddenly goes out during Serena's evening call. Why should not both comfort themselves with the reflection that nothing has happened unto them but such as is common unto women, and dismiss their apprehensions? I know a man who came near bleeding to death because there was not a cobweb to be found in house or barn to stanch the blood. Be advised, dear house mother, and do not lose

all the freshness and impulse to be found in your friend's visit because you have no time to go through the house with your broom upside down.

Here is where comes in that much belabored institution, the Best Room. What vials of sarcasm have been poured out upon it! Its closed shutters have cast a gloom over the pathways of literature. Its musty smells have penetrated the corners of remote novels. Its covered chairs have stiffened in smart essays. Men easily influenced by public opinion have sought to avert the shafts of satire by building themselves ceiled houses without any "spare room"—houses whose every apartment should be occupied. But women, with a stronger instinct of the fitness of things, cling to the "best room," the "spare room," the parlor, and have hitherto made a good fight.

And the women are right. The best room is often absurd, but a best room is not an absurdity. It is appalling to be shown into a square apartment, with heavy, chill air, with a horse-hair sofa, a horse-hair arm-chair, and six horse-hair plain chairs—only this and nothing more. But because a black silk gown is ill fitting you do not therefore discard black silk gowns. The spare room may have a straw matting, if you please, and cane chairs, and blinds open or closed, according to the light and heat, but every housekeeper knows that, after all the essays are written and all the arrows shot, a spare room is a great convenience, a great resource, a great peace of mind.

But it is inhospitable, says the visitor. You do not wish to be turned off by yourself into a room outside

of the family life, destitute of associations, prim, orderly, decorous, but silent and inexpressive. You want to go in where the sewing and reading and talking are, and see your friend in her every-day garb. That may be; but suppose your friend prefers not to be thus seen? You will admit that the family is sacred. Not every one who is welcome in the parlor could be welcome in the family room. Nor is the welcome to the family room at all times one and the same. Absolute freedom to repel is the only guarantee of warmth in welcome. If a house have no room set off for visitors, there is no special gratification in being admitted to its family room. Nor is that home sentiment very desirable which does not instinctively make a distinction between its own and the outside world, however amiable and friendly may be its relations therewith. That family is, indeed, doing its work best—all other things corresponding—which jealously guards itself from an indiscriminate open communion.

There are scenes of leisure, chitchat, light reading, upon which the entrance of a friend would be no intrusion. But when you are in eager consultation over the gray cashmere—will it turn for Anne? will it dye without cockling? is there enough for a whole suit, or shall the brown go with it, and make a suit of two shades for Anne, and perhaps a polonaise for Ella?—and the ruffles are on one chair and the over-skirt on another, and there is a universal ripping and rippling, it is then a solid satisfaction to reflect that there is a room across the hall which tells no tales. It is not a false shame, a foolish pride in keeping up appearances, that makes

you dislike having Mrs. A and Mrs. B and Mrs. C walk in upon your turnings and matchings and contrivings. It is a spontaneous modesty, a natural reticence, which prompts always to the suppression of processes and the exhibition only of results. When, afterward, Mrs. A. praises Anne's new suit, you tell her, not only without shame, but with rejoicing, how ingeniously it was fashioned out of the several birds in last year's nest; but during the fashioning Mrs. A's presence would have disturbed and hindered you. A great deal of house-work is helped on by the knowledge that there is a room in the house where that work does not go, and to which the mistress may repair, leaving all her state secrets behind her. So far from the parlor being an incumbrance, an excrescence, it is a relief, a safety-valve. Let us bow down to Eastlake in sincerity and truth; but to arrange our houses on the pretense that our friends are at all times and in all parts of them equally welcome is, or ought to be, a greater sham than all the veneering we can put into the parlor. Because I treat my friend to-day to roast turkey and plum-pudding, do I mean to insinuate to him that this is my every-day fare, or blush to own that yesterday I dined off hash and hasty-pudding? Nay, rather, I exultantly propound to him that inexorable law of succession by which chopped beef is the inevitable and not unwelcome follower of roast. But none the less I rejoice to do him honor and my family a pleasance by ministering to him a feast of fatter things. It is trouble and expense, but we love trouble and expense when they express affection and friendship. It is not simply that my family feast in his cause—it is

also that he graces and gilds my family feast. The turkey may be in his honor, but it is he that gives the turkey its chief charm for us.

In discussing household art we are too apt to forget the household artist. Many beautiful and desirable things the busy wife and mother must forego. She loves her translucent, vivid china, but better loves the dimpled fingers that do not know how to hold it; and rather than banish them from the table she exiles the china to its dark closet and condescends to plainer ware. But the knowledge that her closet holds that treasure is a joy not to be despised, and when she spreads it upon her table at a friend's coming, and the children gaze upon it with solemn admiration, will you rebuke her for display instead of honesty? To many a woman her parlor is her poem. The living-room must be plain and unadorned, both out of regard to her purse and to the careless fists and feet, the innumerable balls and tops and jackknives, that keep up a constant guerrilla warfare upon polish and fragility. But this parlor, of which the children do not have the run, is the hunting-ground of her fancies. Here her delight in color and form may take shape. Whatever of delicate, of beautiful, of harmonious, of antique, of grotesque, or fantastic pleases her taste she may gather or fashion here, safe from the incursions of her young barbarians, all at play elsewhere. Even if she only opens her grand room on high days, the sun and air can speedily identify it with the universe; and her children are not harmed by having one spot barred to their license. And while it is the outlet for her otherwise necessarily repressed in-

clinations, it is the arena of her friendships — a link whereby she keeps pleasant hold of the outside world. Why, O purblind man! will you insist on finding only ostentation and convention and Mrs. Grundy where a wiser and deeper gaze might reveal sympathies and aspirations and all gracious sensibilities?

## XV.

## *THE FASHIONS.*

HAS any great philosopher, any original thinker, ever said that no man is so wise as all men? If not, I will say it myself rather than it should go unsaid. The fools may be, as Lady Mary Wortley Montague affirmed, three out of four in every person's acquaintance; the multitude seems sometimes to go blindly and persistently in the wrong track; nevertheless the average common sense of the world is immense. The course of the people is wildly zigzag, yet a line following their general direction probably comes nearer the right line of advance than any line which the wisest philosopher could mark out.

Loud and deep are the maledictions uttered upon the fashions. Virtuous women denounce them by the fireside. Virtuous men rail at them from pulpit and printing-press. The extravagance, the bankruptcy, the domestic dissensions, a great part of the misery that mars the beauty and disturbs the peace of society, are laid at the door of fashion. But what is fashion? It is simply the common way of doing things. Things must be done. We all agree to that. The human animal was not sent furred or hairy into the world. It must dress itself. In this climate it must dress itself a good deal. The bear and the beaver have no opportunity of setting or following the fashions. They go in a fore-ordained groove.

The duck's neck and the peacock's tail are wonderful specimens of splendor in attire, but neither duck nor peacock has any hand in the matter. To man alone is given the high art of using taste, judgment, genius, in his clothes. And high art it is, in spite of all our denunciations.

Man and his Maker are the formers of all the fashions of the world. Man devises his own dress. The Creator devises the dress of all the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea. If we are to be taught by example, there need be inherently no limit to variety and splendor of costume. So far as usefulness is concerned, all the birds might just as well be gray. Does a fish taste any better because his scales shimmer like opal in the sunshine? Man may wreak himself on invention, but he can never hope to surpass the splendor of the beetle and the butterfly. Why is the cut of a coat, the tint of a gown, unworthy of the human mind, when the Creator has so clothed the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven? A woman trims her hat, but God made the feather. If the Almighty and All-knowing could find His good pleasure in spreading the blue of the heavens and the green of the meadows—if He enjoyed strewing the earth with blossoms, and filling these autumn woods with every fantasy of color and brilliance, shall we disdain to follow Him with unequal steps, and weave His textures and mingle His hues for the adornment of what He has chosen to be the perfect flower of His world, the crown of His creation—man, little lower than the angels?

Dressing is not a mere whim, arbitrary, superficial,

frivolous. Frivolous men and women will develop and display their frivolity in dress as in all other matters; but the fashion of dress is founded on deep principles, shaded by delicate distinctions, fruitful of great results. It is not simply that the sorrow of France drapes all the world in dun; but climate, vigor, nationality, progress, droop the folds or tighten the wraps, blend or blazon the colors. Dress is, indeed, so important, so vital a matter, that it has been thought dangerous for one nationality, though never so superior, to tamper with the costume of another, however inferior. Mr. Charles Nordhoff, an outgrowth of the highest civilization of New York, thinks that "*the deleterious habit of wearing clothes* has done much to kill off the Hawaiian people." Our missionaries, good and great men as they were, had not sufficiently studied fashion. They probably thought, as most of us think, that "fashion" is the device of some "scarlet woman"—some emanation from the Evil One that lies in wait to devour—and never considered that in their own black coats and white chokers they were as rigidly following the fashions as the most gayly dressed lady at the midnight ball. They did not consider that "fashion," prescribing its scantiness and simplicity to the Hawaiian, had its foundation in the requirements of soil and climate, or was any thing but barbarian, and to be supplanted at the earliest possible moment by the hat and coat and trowsers, the shoes and bonnet and gown, of New England's rigorous skies.

There is something almost awful in the revolutions of the fashions. Periodicity is of itself mysterious. Why does one winter's pneumonia repeat itself the

next winter? Why do the chills and fever shake you and burn you every twenty-one days? Why do the canker-worms bury themselves on the tenth of June, and the cattle go to pasture on the twentieth of May? Why should the hoops that moved Addison's ridicule rise and round and vanish in our own day? What wonderful working of the inner world brings up again the Josephine waist, the Pompadour hair, the Grecian skirt? It is not the whim or the caprice of one man or woman any more than is the birth and death of a language, the creation and adoption of a word or a song. Eugénie in Paris could friz the forehead of Christendom, but Eugénie at Chiselhurst has no more power than the Tuileries can give to Madame Thiers.

A little while ago a lady presented herself in the house of a friend, dressed in a gown just thirty years old. The corsage was pointed in front, full of close gathers at the point and loose gathers on the shoulders, open behind. The skirt was straight and full, without gore or over-skirt. The sleeves would pass very well for modern flowing sleeves, and the muslin under-sleeves were sufficiently fashionable to escape observation. At the time when that dress was made mothers used to entertain their daughters with accounts of the narrow gored skirts which they wore in their youthful days. When those daughters grew up they wore skirts gored and narrow as their mothers had done before them.

Why do the revolving years thus put down one and bring up another? Or would it be better that we should have either the one or the other constantly? Is there intrinsic advantage in either? To my eye the gored

narrow under-skirt with the short draped over-skirt is prettier than the plain full skirt; but if next year the over-skirt should disappear, and women go back to single blessedness, no doubt the lovely forms of wearers and the nimble fingers of seamstresses would give it the grace and beauty which seem to inhere in the present style.

It is not whether you shall or shall not follow the fashion; it is what fashion and whose fashion shall you follow. It is whether you shall follow unintelligently or intelligently, moderately or extravagantly. Mr. Nordhoff's party came across a man at work in very scanty attire. Out of respect to his visitors, the man, after receiving them, slipped into the bush, and re-appeared clad in hat and shirt, confidently believing, no doubt, that he had thus approved himself a cosmopolitan. But in rejecting Hawaiian attire he had not become wholly American, and while the first may have been somewhat startling, the second was ridiculous into the bargain. And when to this you add that the gentle and gracious Hawaiians are dying out at the rate of sixty per cent. in forty years, and partly, at least, under the weight of their clothing and in the heavy shade of their close houses, it is surely time to pause and consider whether fashion, in Hawaii and elsewhere, may not have its own sufficient reasons for being.

"If life and death are the same, why do you not kill yourself?" asked a rash man of a Stoic.

"Because they are the same," replied the Stoic.

Fashion is of no account; why should we follow it?

But if it is of no account we may just as well follow

it as frown on it. A woman—and a man too—must be dressed. Why not, then, dress like other people? Why not dress like the people who are alive and will make remarks, rather than like the people who are dead and tell no tales? It is certainly pleasanter to be inconspicuous than conspicuous. We do not begrudge the toga to the Romans, but Cicero himself would not like to dine in it where every one else wore his dress-coat. Truth and loyalty are due to the absent; politeness should be paid to the present. A girl should stand up for her grandmother against all comers, but no interpretation of the fifth commandment makes it incumbent upon her to wear the "calash" which sheltered that good lady from the sun during her earthly pilgrimage.

When we see Nilsson and Kellogg acting Margaret in simplest, finest muslin or crape, whose white folds fall and sweep with statuesque grace, we are charmed with the garb, and would fain dispense with paniers and rufflings and doublings. But presently a lady appears in the drawing-room splendid with sheen of satin, the fairy frost-work of lace, the white repose of pearls, or the dazzle of diamonds; the little country girl flits among her flowers, fresh as they, with the morning red upon her cheeks, the heaven's blue in her eyes, and every seam of her cambric gown and every puff of her fluttering ribbons modeled upon the last fashion plate, and at once the ancients go down before the moderns. The flowing lines of crape and muslin, you say, may answer for the stage—may have answered well for Helen, with a maiden to every fold, for Aspasia entrancing

the youths and the philosophers of Athens; but they would fare but hardly in the scrimmage of modern life, in the daylight of gardens, or the glitter of evening splendors.

We can hardly find words strong enough to express our disapprobation of the cramping bodies of modern dress. Our ladies would be disgusted, says the fashion denouncer, to see their Venus, their Psyche, their Clytie, tricked out in nineteenth-century corsage. But no more, I imagine, than would the critics to see the nineteenth-century ladies dressed in Venus's array. Clytie's mantua-making is perfectly hygienic, but her loose robe,

> "Slipping down, leaves bare
> Her bright breast, shortening into sighs."

Yet Clytie followed the fashions of her day and sinned not, and Anna Maria follows the fashions of her day, "close-buttoned to the chin," with equal innocence. If the close waist fits well, it is a healthful waist. It may be clumsy and uncomfortable, pinching here and bagging there, and then it is a trial to health and temper. But the master of arts among dress-makers knows that a dress too tight is a misfit; that to be perfect it *must* be comfortable. The really elegant dress admits full play of all the muscles that a woman has any occasion to use while she is wearing it. And surely the American woman of our age would be no better equipped for her work by adopting the costume of Helen.

It is to be said, moreover, that in our day fashion is to the last degree accommodating. If one has constitutional objections to the plain waist, the polonaise is

ready, with every degree of fullness. If corsets are repugnant, they can be dispensed with, and no one be the wiser but the dispenser. If skirts are too long, what doth hinder that they be shortened? If they ought to hang from the shoulders, go hang them. None of these things move the world from its equipoise. One can accomplish them all, and yet live and move and have her being without rebuke—nay, even without notice from fashion.

Some of our prophets predict a return to the sandal of antiquity; and if fashion were a matter of will, we might perhaps advocate the change. If sandals could be so arranged as to keep the feet warm and dry in winter, they would be cool and charming in summer, and neat and pleasant all the year round to the foot, which they would protect without confining. But our various little side issues of foot-drawings and broad soles avail but little. In shoes as in gowns neither the large nor the small has any advantage; but the shoe that fits you is the right shoe. You make much ado with models and measurements, and after weeks of waiting are put to pedal torture. You step into the next shoe shop, and in ten minutes are shod with suppleness and strength.

It is a most wise and benign arrangement of Providence that we can follow the fashions, and are not forced to lead them—even our own. Here and there rises a sovereign of style who by some inward genius seizes, combines, produces, creates—the artist of costuming. The rest of us, the common herd, copy with what closeness we may, in such fabrics as we can command. Of

ourselves we have no originating power. Left to ourselves, we should be in sorry plight. Yet we recognize beauty when it is presented to us. We detect harmony; we shun discord and glare and violence. To design our own costume would exhaust our ingenuity without satisfaction. To follow our leaders is half a pastime. We have the pleasure of selection with the minimum of fatigue, and the great bulk of time left for other and more strenuous occupations. After a day's shopping or an hour under the dress-maker's hand, a woman bemoans herself for her Paradise Lost; yet it is really surprising to see how short is the time which she is *forced* to spend on clothes in order to be very well dressed. Could Charles Sumner deliver orations in a sash, or Mr. Longfellow write poetry in paniers? Certainly not. Nor would Mrs. Stowe have better moulded Uncle Tom in coat tails, or Mrs. Browning sung in trowsers. *Suum cuique.* A woman spends hours in embroidering a gown, when she might have learned a language or saved a soul. True; but there are times when she does not feel like either learning a language or saving a soul. Then the growth of silken leaves and buds under the busy fingers is no task, but a solace. I know a woman who

> "Can speak Greek
> As naturally as pigs squeak;
> To whom Latin is no more difficile
> Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle;"

who dreams in German and thinks in French, and when it comes to soul-saving is a savor of life unto life—who

yet embroiders her own capes and gowns and those of her friends.

There are follies and whimsies in fashion. There is opportunity for individual taste and choice. Nevertheless, the wisest thing for people in general to do is to follow the fashion that prevails. It is only in exceptional cases that they will obtain a larger result of satisfaction at a less outlay of trouble by setting up their own standard. Dress is too important to be denounced, too significant to be neglected, but too pliable to found a fight on!

What we want is strong-minded and large-natured women who will not be the slave of dress, or of reform, or of any one idea; who will understand the philosophy and recognize the beauty and adopt the necessities of dress without straining its possibilities; who will neither dwarf nor magnify its importance, but will know how to follow fashion with moderation and discrimination, to lead it with beneficence, and make it in all things a minister of grace. If the woman is subordinate to the dress, it is not the fault of the dress, but of the woman.

Alas! that not only a servile but a dignified following of the fashion imposes the disagreeable duty of following them into the shops! It is not simply for their exemption from toiling and spinning that we envy the lilies of the field, but that they should be arrayed more magnificently than Solomon in all his glory, and not even have to go up to town to buy material!

Shopping would be divested of half its horrors if dry-goods clerks would be kind. Is it too much to ask?

They have all the advantage of situation. They are familiar with the locality. They know exactly where the black silks are to be found, what is the lurking-place of the sheetings, what corner is haunted by the hosiery. The quality, the price, the style of goods—they have it all at their fingers' ends. They are barricaded by the counters and supported by ranks of acquaintances. You, constitutionally timid, full of misgiving concerning your own skill and taste, with but a vague idea of what you ought to want, enter a palace of splendor and confusion, to encounter, single-handed, these veterans of the yard-stick. If they are civil, friendly, re-assuring, it is as much as you can do to keep your wits well in hand, and choose from the distracting variety the one little supply that you demand. If they are insolent, curt, indifferent, what remains but retreat?

There are different species of objectionable clerks. One is voluble, familiar, and altogether abominable. You never willingly approach him, but, accosting him unawares, you feel as if you were instinctively and constantly holding him by a tight rein to keep him from open impertinence, and not always successfully. To the severest simplicity of address he will sometimes respond rudely. In novels, ladies are majestic, impressive, all-powerful. They repress manifestations of ill-breeding in others by the overpowering grandeur of their own ladyhood. But in real life real ladies are quite as likely to be modest, shrinking, easily subdued by brutality, and capable of offering to aggression no resistance but flight. Such swiftly succumb to the bold and blatant clerk—succumb by flying, not buying.

There is the teasing clerk, who leaves you no quiet for reflection and no space for comparison, but imagines the way to secure your custom is to urge you without intermission. There is the indifferent clerk, who says he has not the goods you want before you know yourself what you do want; who throws the parcel down on the counter as if it were to take or to leave, but manifests not the slightest interest in ascertaining your wish or accommodating or assisting you. There is the snapping-turtle clerk, who brings you to the point, re-adjusts your somewhat incoherent question, and answers you with a quick, impatient directness that quite humiliates you. Him, though some condemn unmeasuredly, I can tolerate. Honest human petulance, born of fatigue, is the least unpardonable of mercantile ill manners. Consider that the man has been the target for all sorts of questions, wise and foolish, through long hours. If we had been in his place, doubtless by this time we should greet an angel with a growl. But remember this, O long-suffering dry-goods man! you have made your bed, and you must lie in it. You are tied by the tape-measure of your own free-will. It is your business to answer questions. You are paid to display goods. Doubtless there may often be before the counter stupidity, selfishness, unreasonableness, lack of principle; but these do not justify or excuse the display of such traits behind the counter. Still less do they excuse their outlay upon the modest, the moderate, the upright. When clerks have been teased by women who do not examine goods with frank intent, but simply to idle away a superfluous hour, to gratify

a morbid and frivolous taste, to bear off surreptitiously some imported idea for domestic manufacture, it is not absolutely unnatural or impossible that they should be betrayed into irritation; but it is unbusiness-like and unwise. They will never thus repress the idle or the curious, but they will often offend the unoffending. Let them remember that the shopping as well as the selling world is a much-tried and long suffering world. Does the woman, under pretense of buying a gown, merely take note of its style that she may make her own flounces after the same pattern? Be not too harsh upon her, outraged dry-goods clerk, who will have no percentage from your sales to her. Doubtless she would be only too glad to buy your robes outright, but her husband can not or will not furnish the means, and she is forced to use her own fingers. Do not begrudge her the small help of your lay figure. It would be, indeed, far better that she should be honest and frank, and express her intention, not attempt to carry it out by deceit. Probably no one ever asked permission to examine goods without receiving a courteous and prompt assent. But the poor thing is not unused to brutality, and has unhappily learned too much indirection. You, dry-goods clerk, are young and strong, and a man. Do you, by kindness and helpfulness, further her aims, and so win her over to confidence, ease, and outrightness, not repel, frighten, and wound her by your demeanor.

By far the great majority of women shop honestly. They go to many places, they overturn many goods, they postpone and hesitate; but they have a serious

object in view. One little ingrain carpet does not amount to much. In a great warehouse piled with the wealth of the loom it seems ridiculously small, and the clerk naturally wishes my lady would buy her strip and be done with it. Softly, magnificent sir! The poor little ingrain will be before her eyes for many a year. Her husband's tastes are to be consulted. Her purse is of cast-iron. Her children are to grow up on that carpet, and learn from it color and contour. Will it harmonize with the paper and the chintz lounge? Will it fade prettily, and will it cut over well into a bedroom carpet when its race is run in the sitting-room? To the purchaser the cheap ingrain is a more momentous matter than the costly Moquette, for it must last longer and be more looked at: so let her hesitate and compare and reflect without impertinent haste, urgency, or impatience from you. And even if she makes up her mind to nothing, and leaves the carpet on your hands, let her not be condemned for indecency or vacillation. The probability is that she knows her own business a great deal better than you do, and the doubts she expresses are but feeble representatives of the doubts she feels. Moreover, if she does not buy the carpet now, be you sympathetic, obliging, patient with all questioning and objections, and very likely in three or four weeks she will come back to you and buy one twice as good!

There is a prevailing faith in the country districts that the urban dry-goods clerk is a being of preternatural acuteness, that he can detect character at a glance, and discern instantaneously between the righteous and the wicked. If this is a correct opinion, it must be

admitted that there are exceptional cases of outrageous stupidity, and that these exceptions are liable to make a greater ado and deeper impression than the shrewd and keen majority. It would seem, sometimes, as if clerks understood dry-goods, and nothing else. Silk and velvet, flowers and flounces, they appreciate, but words, modulations, manners, they count for nothing. If a woman's culture shows itself in elegant, elaborate, expensive dress, that they comprehend, to that they defer. But culture that has of choice or by force of circumstances been expended in other directions they know nothing about. They can not see it. They do not miss it. Long companionship with dry-goods seems to have given them a sense of dry-goods, and to have stripped them of every other.

A plainly but perfectly dressed lady, with the best blood of the world in her veins, and—what is more imposing to the haberdashing heart—with plenty of money in her pocket, went not long since into a shop to buy napkins. The potentate of the counter showed her such napery as he thought suited to her social position. "These are rather coarse," she suggested. "Have you none finer?" "Oh yes," said the gentleman, "but they are more expensive." It is ever to be regretted that the lady turned in silence and left the shop, because that clerk will never know that it was his own idiotic effrontery, and not the expense of the napkins, which lost him the customer.

A lady who never made any great figure in the world, and certainly not in a water-proof cloak on a rainy day, was seeking a parasol. The clerk showed her some

very common, not to say shabby, specimens, which she declined. A little further down the counter she bought a whole piece of fine and costly linen, observing which, the knight of the parasols came down and begged her to re-examine his assortment, of which he had contrived to unearth an altogether different and better collection. She, too, fell below the requirements of the occasion, and bought her parasol without enlightening him upon her discovery of his stupid mistake.

A lady, large and lovely, a serene Quaker goddess, made some benevolent casual remark to the clerk with whom she was trafficking, just as she would have patted the head of a strange dog who might have run up and sniffed at her gown, and the little whipper-snapper clerk followed her to the door, and—winked at her! And while she stood staring at him in her first amazed consciousness of his individual existence, he winked again! Thus vacuous do the gods make a human skull, yet furnish it with all the ganglia of life.

Happy those merchants who can secure the right sort of clerks! for a right sort there is. I bought a tablecloth of him yesterday. I had forgotten to take the size of the table, or a pattern of the color to be matched. Patiently he evolved my probable needs from my fragmentary facts, discussed pleasantly the presumptive evidence, and seemed as much interested in the harmonies of my dining-room as if he had expected to eat there thrice a day for the remainder of his natural life. Did he deceive me? Not a bit. I know of a surety that my dining-room was no more to him than the peanut-stand on the common opposite. Me and it has he al-

ready alike forgotten. None the less was his momentary and friendly, but not familiar, assumption of interest in me and mine altogether winning and encouraging; and doubtless also was it, for that moment, altogether sincere. His sympathetic and refined nature does unquestionably and spontaneously ally itself for succor and good cheer to all who appeal to him. May his kind heart, his welcoming face, and his engaging manners be a mine of wealth to himself and all his employers and dependents!

Not to all men are given that grace and graciousness, serviceable, not servile, which distinguish a seller of sacques in a warehouse I wot of. A sacque, rich and fine, but not overloaded with trimming, nor grotesque in cut, requires the quest of a Sir Galahad, and Sir Galahad was there to make it. With indescribable deftness and swiftness he overturned pile after pile of garments, making running comments as he went: "This is good material, but too low on the shoulder; this has too deep a collar; this too loud a trimming. If this were a quieter shade! Ah! here it is! and here! Or you may like this." And out they came, shapely and sober. And if they had been gorgeous, I suspect the lady would hardly have known it, so won over was she by his ready helpfulness. And when he brought a brush, and assisted her in disengaging her folds from the dust of our long drought with a dexterity wholly free from officiousness, he needed but to speak the word, and she would have bought every sacque in the shop.

Dry-goods clerking is bad business. There needs no ghost to tell us that. It is petty and showy. It takes

women at their weakest—when they are self-centred and eager. It would seem to give men scarce any play of mind or muscle. They have only to stand, white and waiting, busy to irritation, or frenzied with idleness—forever babbling the price of a ninepenny calico or a spool of cotton. But it is not a business made any better by brazenness and bullying. Modesty, courtesy, gentleness, patience toward the good, and also toward the froward, serve as excellent a purpose here as elsewhere. Among his mantles and his wimples and his crisping-pins, as truly as among shattering trumpets and splintered spear-shafts, will Sir Galahad keep fair, through faith and prayer, his manly and upright heart.

After all, this matter is not so wholly one-sided as it seems. True, the Country goes up to the City to shop, but the City goes down to the Country for the substance of shopping. The City knows only its shop-windows. The Country drinks at the fountain-head whence the shop-windows derive their splendor. Is it new colors that inventors are bending all their ingenuity to create? A late essayist suggested that there are colors which the eye can not yet perceive, and which it never will perceive without more exquisite powers—the result of fine and elaborate training. I wish the writer would look down into my swamp, and see if we have not already as many colors as there is any call for.

It may not be generally known that the world was never so beautiful as it is in this year of our Lord, eighteen seventy-three. Nature is infinite, not simply in colors but in shades. We speak of "grass green," as if every blade of grass had been plunged into one

dye-pot. But in a single pasture stretching before my eyes, close-cropped by browsing cows, the ground is mottled and many-hued as a Persian carpet, yet never other than green. There are little dimples of deep verdure, and one hollow, bent above by an old apple-tree nearly blown down, but recovering itself at the last moment, and transfixed at an acute angle. Into that hollow all the summer rains settle and all the spring snows drift. On it the ice sparkles and shelters, and now its soft slope is a velvet sward, thick and fine and vivid, and wholly unlike the yellow-green of the upland and the bare, bronzed, faded verdancy of the bumps that one can hardly call hillocks. Close by is a field of cabbages, or turnips, or some such homely esculent; but there is no homeliness in its level sweep of pallid green, which is far removed from the hues of my pasture land. Then the brown lines of the railroad dart across the landscape, adding force and law to beauty, their unerring precision a pleasant foil to nature's wildness. Beyond, the fields, too, are turning brown, and the river lounges lazily by, and the long low woods skirt its banks; and my swamp—ah, the splendor of those trees! Every clump is a bouquet, selected and arranged as if with the view of bringing out the strength and glow of each: bright flaming scarlet and cypress green, wine-hued and perfect amber, warm crimsons, and yellows of the brightest and the softest—gradations and blendings of a marvelous delicacy and an endless variety.

Yet sometimes, for all the gold and scarlet, I think nothing is quite so lovely as brown. The swamp is

bordered with ferns. The old stone walls, rough and tumbling, that mark the road are overcrept and overswept with blackberry vines and tansy and golden-rod, with sunflower and the purple endive, wild brake, and gowan, the dandelion of the fall—a tawny tangle; but the rich ferns prevail, lending their deep, soft russet, all mellow, yellow tints, to the afternoon sun, to be shot through and through with his golden fire. Then does Nature's true worshiper long for a brown silk gown to wear in these autumn days, and be in harmony with the earth—a brown silk, russet and lustrous and shimmering, gold in the sun, grave in the shade, pliant to Nature's moods, like the fern and the blackberry vine, that scorn to glow and glitter when their lord, the sun, goes down.

I saw a bird yesterday in an elegant steel-colored polonaise of two shades, with black trimmings. It was perfect in cut and combination; and if he would but have stayed twittering on my apple-tree long enough for an artist to catch his style, I would have sent to the city a fall fashion which should have bewildered even the belles of Broadway. There is nothing to be compared to the quiet elegance of birds. The fields and the trees are inexhaustibly ingenious, but their taste is hardly chastened enough for minute and accurate imitation. A maple-tree walking down street would be in danger of being followed by *gamins;* and even the soberer elm and the presently-to-be-crimsoned oak would run the risk of being called garish and gay. But the little birds hop up, dainty and delicate. Is it mode color your suits shall be? No gray is so soft, no nap

so smooth, as theirs, and the brightness comes in little dashes—dots and tips and fringes, in sheen and quiver and evanescence—an effect rather than a vision.

But when I saw near Calistoga the flower which the old Spaniards named *mariposa*—butterfly—with its broad, apricot-tinted, wing-like petals, dashed with a maroon velvet as soft in tissue as the purple of the heart's-ease, I saw at once where Monsieur Worth found the great first cause of Madame Nightingale's gown. No wonder he has made his name illustrious, if he has gone to the birds and the butterflies and the blossoms for his patterns! Why not follow him, though with unequal steps? Why puzzle over color complications, when a pansy in your garden will tell you what goes with what? Why pay to a foreigner untold heaps of money for his dictum, when a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter? We cry out against the ugliness of the rough earthen jars in which our plants are potted. Rough and ugly they are, but have we mended the matter when we store our slips in glazed vases, painted a bright and shining green, which kills all the color out of the plants? Nature puts all her brightness into leaf and blossom, and makes the boles of her trees as rough and brown as possible, dowered only with their rugged strength, which bears all the beauty aloft. Let us also be rough and rugged as to the bases of our flower-pots, for 'tis our nature too.

I will go down into my swamp and study. It is raining delightful showers, but I love the drip of the leaves and the saucy slap of wet boughs, and the artists say

that gray days are the days for color. We have had a surfeit of sunshine for three weeks of hazy delight. Let us go out to welcome this delicious rain, and come home laden with leaves more ruddy than the rose petals of our last lost June, with golden boughs more lovely than that whose variegated gleam shone through the Sibylline grove into the eyes of pious Æneas.

"Oh, you can't get leaves!" cries Faintheart. "They are so high up. You must have a man and a ladder." A man and a ladder! Bring hither a water-proof and a pair of rubber boots, and leave your ladders and men to their own destruction. Is not my swamp amply supplied with hassocks on purpose to step on? Are there no branches to cling to, that one must bring men and ladders? Nay, has not Nature herself leveled a tree for our climbing? There lies he, a prostrate monarch, but so strong that from the uptorn earth still clinging to his roots he extracts the juices of life, and still nurtures all his tender leaves, and still drinks for his autumn glory the mystic blood-red wine. Safe seated on his fallen trunk, safe housed among his supporting branches, what need of men or ladders? Here is the musical tinkle of the rain on the leaves, the soft rustle of the leaves in the wind. Here is a carpet which the Shah might strangle his ministers for, and a canopy which might task the fairies' wand. Here life gathers its forces for a final stand against wintry death, and here shall victory prevail, for in these hidden nooks green grow the rashes O through all the furious winter's rages.

## XVI.

## *SLEEP AND SICKNESS.*

THE one requisite to good health, good looks, sweet temper, prosperity in business, and general success in life, is sleep. I do not know whether we shall be able, as Matthew Arnold says, to "hit it off happily" with Solomon. It is, perhaps, not quite easy to tell exactly what he had in his mind; but if he meant that people should try to cut down their sleep to the smallest possible allowance, it may be superfluous, but it is certainly irresistible, to remark that I do not agree with him. But he probably did not mean that. He certainly would not be likely to differ from me.

The necessity of sleep, it may be admitted, is a disagreeable necessity. To turn aside from all the pleasures of life, from the sweet consciousness of existence, to give over thought and love and memory and hope—all plans and pursuits—and go down into forgetfulness or unconsciousness, is, or seems to be, an unspeakable loss. It is a death, temporary, but imperious and ever-recurring. Yet it is so universal, so gradual, so natural, that we yield to it not only without dread, but with delight. In the silent splendor of star-lit nights, which seem to put us on a brotherly footing with the whole universe, in the blackness of nights that know no star, when we seem to be standing alone in the solitude of eternity, life is too fascinating, and we begrudge a mo-

ment lost; but even then, without will, against will, the heavy eyelids droop, and, all unhindered, the sly soul slips away into some remote recess of the brain to lie in ambush for the rising dawn and the strong new world.

If we could have been made to get along without sleep, I should like it better, but since sleep we must, why should we quarrel with fate? Our ancestors, stanch men in many regards, have yet done the world harm by their indiscriminate abuse of sleep. One would think, to read some books, that slumber was an invention of the Evil One, to be repressed and snubbed continually. On the contrary, sleep comes nearer being a panacea than any pill or potion ever concocted.

In the country, people sometimes become so demoralized on the subject that early rising takes on the proportions of a vice. I have an inward conviction that the farmers from the outskirts snap their whips with fresh unction as they go by our village houses in the early morning, exulting in the thought that they are up and about while we sluggards have scarcely rubbed our eyes open. I have heard a family admiringly spoken of because it rose, breakfasted, and had prayers before the dawn had fairly reddened the east. Can such prayers be acceptable? Our people do, indeed, yield to the truth of history so far as to tell children of beauty-sleep, and bid them go to bed early; but they forget all about it in the morning, and stimulate them to early rising. Indeed, ignorance and folly sometimes go so far as to awaken children for the purpose of getting them up, which is just not murder in the first de-

gree. Lay it down as the rule of family life that nobody is to be waked by external means. There may be extraordinary circumstances which justify a violation of the rule. If the house is on fire, and hand and steam engines fail to extinguish the flames, sleepers must be aroused; but even then begin with those nearest the fire, and bestir others only as the danger advances. I suppose it is absolutely certain that when a man has slept long enough he will wake of his own accord.

The time at which sleep is taken is of less account than the amount of sleep. If it can be had in darkness, doubtless that is best; but sleep by daylight is a good thing too. Some people take credit to themselves for accomplishing much before breakfast, but after breakfast are constantly found napping on the sofa or nodding in the lounging chair. What superior virtue is there in sleeping by installment to sleeping in the lump? Some people are called lazy because they take a nap after a noonday dinner; but the efficiency of their waking hours is a sufficient justification for their midday repose. Sleep anywhere and everywhere is good. Ministers complain if here and there a member of their congregation grows drowsy; but as I look around and see the hard-working men and women, all clean and fresh and smooth in their Sunday suits, sheltered from sun, released from toil, and soothed by the pleasant voice of a well-beloved pastor into a slightly unsteady but richly earned repose, I bless them unaware. Not the least of the many benefits wrought us by the clergy is the sweet somnolence which so gently and benignly broods over a weary and happy congregation on a sul-

try Sunday afternoon. Fore-ordination and free-will may be hard to reconcile; moral and natural responsibility may be difficult of discrimination; the bearing of election on duty is not easy to see; but no man can go into an airy, pleasant church, sit down in peace among his friends and neighbors, and fall softly asleep to the sound of holy words from holy lips, without great gain to the life that now is, and, I believe and trust, with no loss to that which is to come.

As for Napoleon and the others who are brandished over us as having wrought their great deeds on four hours' sleep, in the first place I do not believe a word of it, and in the second place, if they did, it was but an exception; and we might just as well put our eyes out because Homer wrote the "Iliad" without any, as to rub open our eyes at four o'clock in the morning because Napoleon slept four hours in his saddle. One man's need is no rule for another man's life. There is but one infallible rule for the sleepers, that every one sleeps till he wakes of himself; and for the awake, that they shut the doors softly, so as not to disturb those who are asleep. This is the whole duty of man.

If one should desire a few little secondary rules, it might be well to warn him against self-glorification. Neither rising early availeth any thing, nor rising late. The wise man who used to rise with the sun or before it in our copy-books may have been foolish in so doing, but must have been foolish if he based his wisdom on his early rising. The question is, What does he do after he is up? The early bird has been catching the worm for many generations, but I never heard that the late bird

starved for lack of worms; and what of the owl and the bat, who do not get up at all till honest folks are in bed?

Ah, no! Solomon's sluggard was doubtless a worthless fellow, who slept as lazily as he wrought, and did every thing by halves. When a sound soul craves a little more sleep, a little more slumber, it is a sign that he needs it, and his first duty is to take it. Nature knows when there has been sleep enough, and makes us aware by the clear brain and the steady nerve and the blood alert; and then there needs not bell nor voice, but only the inward prompting, to set our life astir.

Sleep is the preventive and the cure of disease. Lack of sleep opens the door to every malady under heaven. Sleep, the shadow of death, is the minister of life. Plunder of sleep may give a phantom of life, but it is the herald and the preparer of death.

Yet I suspect there is a great deal of dread and sympathy wasted on illness. Health should be the habit of life, but sickness, too, has its sunny side. I am inclined to think it is the friends and attendants of sick people who have the worst of it, and not the sick people themselves. This is certainly the case in some forms of illness. When you are in the depths, you do not know it. When you can not breathe, other people are alarmed, and forecast possibilities; for yourself, you think neither of past nor future, but only of breathing. There have been people who in moments of great danger had great thoughts, as if the soul bloomed in the sudden eternal light to wondrous power. I must confess to only the most commonplace experiences. Once

I was thrown from a carriage directly under the horse. I heard—I might almost say felt—his fierce pawing close to my head, and all that my stupid soul could say to itself was, "He has not hit me this time, but perhaps he will the next, and it will kill me. Nor this time either." May not the final transit be in itself as commonplace, as little momentous? In spite of all the terrors of the theologies and the mysteries of the metaphysics, death is as natural as birth. Who can tell that we do not pass through the one as through the other, all unaware? Life opens before the little one bright and beautiful, wrapped around with love and tenderness, but whence and how he came he knows as little as the pink-petaled rose-bud opening to the June sun. So may it not be that Death clasps close the parting soul in dreamless natural repose, leaving to the living all the pain, while the dead, forever alive, wakes wonderingly to the glory that shall be?

We hear of illness around us every day. Nay, in some dim and distant past, some vague remote Egyptian antiquity, we seem to see a vision of scarlet fever and whooping-cough, of chicken-pox and measles, and vaccination and pennyroyal tea, and housing and petting, in which we ourselves have played a prominent part. But strong with inherited vigor and country air, and wholesome lack of training, and free, wild, generous living, you have grown up, dear friend, in robust, not to say defiant, health, and have carried all along your manhood or womanhood an indomitable, irrepressible physical force and activity which have, perhaps, even surged over upon your mental characteristics, and made

you the least in the world arrogant, scornful, exacting, exultant, where you otherwise would have been, let us hope, the very pink of meekness and modesty.

Ah! good friend, exult no more. Even for you Nemesis waits. Even you are approaching your boundary lines, though you know it not, or even were aware that for you existed limitations.

So you go plunging into the swamp and paddling through the "slush" of our unrelenting weather, and never heed the obstacles. Obstacles are made not to be counted, but surmounted. Each day has its visit, its business, its excursion, its engagement, and if the day comes with blinding sleet, or whirling snow, or icy rain, so much the worse for rain and sleet and snow, but away you go. There has never occurred to you the possibility of being beaten in any contest whatever. What said General Upton when the committee suggested that in his work on tactics were to be found no rules for the arrangement of a surrender? "That, sir, is a thing which should never be provided for in an American army!" Bravo, General Upton!

But there comes a night on which you go to bed with the delightful consciousness of aims accomplished, and in fifteen minutes are surprised that, instead of its being morning, it is still the same day you went to bed, and you are, moreover, aware of your left shoulder. Unhappy! the only health is unconsciousness. Your intangible idea develops into a distinct ache in the top of that dreadful left shoulder, which no change of position, no determination to fix your mind on some other subject, will remove. You make Herculean efforts to

forget that shoulder, but in vain. The ache resolves itself into a well-defined pain, and the pain becomes adventurous, and organizes exploring expeditions northward and southward, eastward and westward, and your time is beguiled by the lively interest you take in its progress and enterprises. Now your chest seems a great cave full of stalagmites and stalactites, and the stalagmites and stalactites are all luminous, brilliant, crystalized pain. Now it is a little imp alight on your shoulder, clutching it harder and harder, and a whole legion of little imps pour after him, and spin down your nerves, and follow along every avenue of sense and blood and breath, gnawing, gnawing, gnawing with monotonous persistence and ever-growing power. From force of habit you fall asleep, and are startled awake again, and still those imps are at it. It was amusing for a while, but it presently becomes tiresome, and then exasperating. There is a point beyond which even novelty ceases to interest, and the ice-cold night was never so mighty. It broods over you like a pall, discouraging, deadening. And the little imps have so possessed themselves of you that they have fairly driven you out of your strongholds. You dare not go down into your own lungs, but only hang on to breath by your eyelids, and every short, shallow gasp is a sharp pain. But you battle through the night with fitful sleep, and weary, wondering waking, thinking longingly of sunshine and the register, and promising yourself to give the imps a sweat if ever daylight comes. Daylight does come and sunshine, and the register and the blazing wood fire, and mustard and hot iron, and those little malignant

fiends carry the day over them all, dancing and raving and raging through your astonished blood.

Till somebody suggests the doctor. The doctor! It is an absurd idea. A doctor is for sickness. Can a doctor cast out devils? Sickness is—well, you do not know exactly what, seeing you never had it, but certainly not this. This is a horde of minute, riotous evil spirits, reckless, spiteful, mocking morsels of demons, that have entered into you, and are holding high carnival. But they so occupy your time and attention that you make no effective opposition to any plans or proposals of the outside world; and presently the doctor appears upon the scene, and the outside world somehow begins to buzz and darken into a dream, a twilight, a sea of unreality, over which the phantoms of familiar friends loom unreally, but whose doubtful expanse is broken by solid islands of mustard and poultice, and batting and bitterness, and across whose sombre silence shoot gleams of drollery and grotesque, demure, fantastic fun. And there is time no longer, nor any division of day and night, until a time, times, and the dividing of time.

And this is a "fit of sickness." You were never more amazed in your life. Out of the dark, doubtful sea you are dragged to the dry land of faint but real life, and behold the little imps are beaten off, shut and sealed in the caverns whence they swarmed, and there never were any imps, and their name was Pneumonia; and you see the light that it is good, and you can divide the light from the darkness, as in the beginning, and you call the light Day, and the darkness you call Night.

But to think that you, the unassailable, have had "a fit of sickness!" And that this is it! And that this strange, bewildering, absorbing, altogether unimaginable experience has been going on around you from the foundation of the world, and you had no more idea of it or what it was like than if you had been founded in another world!

Then comes the weary waiting of convalescence, the impatience to up and about, the hunger that may not be appeased. Not a bit of it. That is the way people talk, but it is not so. Convalescence is a delightful border-land between death and life, a Beulah in which you love to linger, whose grapes go down sweetly. It is a condition in which a perfect consciousness of existence is combined with an absolute negation of duties. You know that you are a nuisance, a cumberer of the ground,

> "Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
> Creation's blot, creation's blank,"

and you do not care. The furnace fires may go out, the wine-cellar run dry, the tank overflow, the barrel of meal waste, and the cruse of oil fail; but you are certain that your thermometer will be cared for, that your sherry-glass will never be empty, and you lie in a fine though feeble disdain for all these carking cares. People can not find things: let them hunt. The draymen are swearing outside, but it is no business of yours to show them how to get the coal into the cellar. The world is going on, and you have no responsibility whatever about the order of its going. This is the true joy of convalescence. This is the way to make illness a

means of grace. If you go caring for other people, you might as well be well. But to lie in tranquil and luxurious inertia, absolutely devoid of energy, without purpose, without conscience, without thought, wholly selfish, and unpricked in your selfishness — it is no mean paradise. Life is so full that it is an exquisite satisfaction for once, and for a time, to find it empty. The hours and the days lapse languidly, and you have had a fortnight of bliss in the process and blank in the memory, and by that time, ten to one, your soul is astir again—but the pause was delicious.

Hungry, did you say? There are terrible traditions of fever-parched lips which ignorance forbade to moisten, and fever-wasted frames which food might not upbuild. Who has not his story to tell of some convalescent ancestor who escaped his keeper and devoured, clandestinely, but with impunity, a whole mince-pie before he was discovered by horror-smitten friends? But we have changed all that. The doctors nowadays are a friendly folk, and prophesy smooth things. Water? Yes, indeed, as much as you like. Milk? The more the better. Eat whatever you wish, and whenever you choose, and as long as you can. The Old School Presbytery stand around astonished; but, strong in the law, you eat steadfastly on with mild convalescent defiance, and climb steadily back to strength. Against such proof there is no law. And the neighbors send in their best canned strawberries, and apple jellies, and currant wine, and you swallow them all with only moderate gratitude, not to say placid indifference. So far from being in a hurry to go back into the world again, you want nothing

but to be let alone. The turmoil, the eagerness, the busyness seem to you so aimless. A and B and C go by every day regularly to meet the morning trains. What folly! as if it made any difference whether they met the train or not. But your exclamation-point is a very small one. You are not to be disturbed by deep emotions of any sort. The din of the outside world comes softly to your ears. Since the din is not unmusical, very well; but the world might as wisely be silent. Why should you get up? It is easier to stay in bed. But who *wants* to be strong? It is just as comfortable to be weak.

> "Far or forgot to me is near;
> Shadow and sunlight are the same;
> The vanished gods to me appear;
> And one to me are shame and fame."

Ah! Providence has wisely ordered it. Sickness is too luxurious a thing to last. Canned strawberries forever would eat the life out of immortality itself. Peace and tranquillity and unruffled seas are not of this world. For this world, whatever come hereafter, activity and endeavor, research and doubt, and balancing and adjusting, house-guiding and money-earning, social service, dress-coats, and a thousand narrow ruffles to be lined and bound with the same in a different shade. Why, here you are, clean out of dry-dock, under full head of steam, plowing mid-ocean through the surf and spray of sundered metaphors as aforetime, and all that past of silence and serenity, and grass-grown streets and mossy walls, is already as a dream when one awaketh.

Mr. Bachelor—the Chevalier Bayard of our age, as

one foolishly and fondly saith; but that I must disallow: I have a private Bayard or two of my own who must not be discrowned. All the honors of the indefinite article I freely grant, nay, gladly pay you. In a republic of Bayards you shall hold a high place, or, if a kingdom there must be, you shall salute with royal grace messieurs mes frères!—

Chevalier Bayard, you have been ill, say the newspapers, in curt *itemic* phrase. A brother in unity reaches forth to you the right hand of fellowship in that goodly and gracious experience. You are just beginning to sit up, they report, and mean thereby only a symptom. But I know how the foundations of the world drop away beneath your feet under that first feeble rising. Courage, my brother, I do not say. I rather counsel cowardice! Be weak, if you would quit yourself like a man! Your great prototype, no doubt, in typhoid fever called for drink like a sick girl. Do not control yourself. Let the well people do that. Be petulant, be querulous, be imperious and exacting. It is a sign that you will recover. And above all things, do not hurry matters. You may never be ill again as long as you live. It is your one chance for leisure and luxury and absolute despotism. Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer. If they force you from the friendly couch, cling to the almost as friendly lounge. Battle, then, for the reclining chair. Make a stand on dressing-gown and slippers. Go not out-doors till the last gun is fired. Who breathes the outside air is lost to all the privileges and immunities of illness. Onewhohasbeenthereatura te salutat!

XVII.

## *DINNERS.*

Wisdom is justified of her children. What is best for the soul is best for the body, and the good of the body is the good of the soul. Self-denial has its own sphere; but, in the long run, that which is most pleasant is most salutary. Certainly, then, we make some mistakes in our domestic arrangements. Our dinners are not proof of mortal infallibility. It is not necessary to advocate abstemiousness. The notion sometimes promulgated that we should rise from the table as hungry as we sat down may be consistently advocated by boarding-house keepers, but is tolerably sure to receive from the rest of the world the neglect which it merits. The only creed for rational beings embraces what is called "a square meal"—plenty of food, varied and agreeable, and freedom to eat till you are satisfied. But do we not give undue prominence to puddings and pies, while the superfluity and unwholesomeness of dinners lie in the pudding and pie department more than in any other? In the country the temptation is strong. Milk and eggs, sugar and raisins, are always at command, and a pudding, therefore, is a steadfast friend. But meat, though spasmodically abundant, is somewhat precarious, both in quality and appearance. Beefsteak may be had for the asking, if you speak in season, but a juicy and

tender steak is a gift of the gods vouchsafed at uncertain intervals. As for vegetables, they are a lost art. According to Hume, no testimony should be allowed to establish an occurrence which is contrary to our experience. In spite, therefore, of horticultural tradition, I believe that vegetables do not grow from the soil, but flourish only in the city markets. Meat and vegetables, however, are far more wholesome than pies and puddings, and, moreover, an abundant and varied supply of them dispenses with the call for sweetmeats. A dinner of beefsteak and potatoes leaves something to be desired; but if corn and beans, succotash, macaroni, squash, and onions, pickles, apple-sauce, and cranberry, be provided in judicious installments, the dinner becomes a sufficient meal without further foraging. A cup of coffee or tea, bread and cheese and fruit, are all that the epicure need further ask. In Sweden and Northern Europe generally we are told that far greater simplicity obtains than among us. Heavy and elaborate desserts are dispensed with, and hard black bread and cheese crowning the dinner is a dish to set before a king. And so sure is Nature to be true to herself that even our own pampered compatriots learn to love this simplicity, and write home abusive letters about American tables that are no more heavily laden than were their own up to the moment of their departure. I have even known Americans to become so enamored of foreign frugality as to import casks of brown bread from Sweden wherewithal to garnish the family board. But who ever heard of a Danish pie or a Norwegian pudding on its travels?

Vegetable food is not only more wholesome than sweets, but far easier to prepare. It is more simply cooked. The ignorant servant can learn its processes far sooner than the more labored combinations of cake and pastry. And when she has mastered the eternal harmonies, and knows what goes with what, she needs only general orders, and not constant surveillance. The barrel of bread and cheese does the rest. Talk of a horn of plenty!

When we country folk hear of the state dinners eaten by city folk, wherein a dozen courses follow each other in brief and brilliant succession, we are wont to thank Heaven that *we* are not as this Prodigal. But if just balances could be procured, I more than half suspect the "heavy feeding" would be found on the side of American rather than French dinners. Look, for example, at the regulation state dinner of the farmhouse and the rural community. Turkey as the headcentre, fattened and stuffed to the last degree of richness; all available vegetables, sauces, and sweet pickles; plum-pudding; mince, apple, and squash pie; cranberry tart; sweet cider—always *sweet* cider—coffee, tea, and cheese. There are people still living who think the Thanksgiving board incomplete without a boiled dish at the head; often a goose and a turkey hunt in couples down its laden level. Now you have only to drive this team tandem instead of abreast, and immediately you have a twelve-in-hand as antic as any Frenchman can display. But because you choose to marshal your tidbits all at once and all o'er with a mighty uproar, I do not know that you are any more frugal, sim-

ple, or democratic than your neighbor who prefers to have his in relays. When we add to the city dinner the time devoted to eating it, the interspersed wines, which are an aid to digestion if not to devotion, the superior attractiveness of its dissolving views to the whole solid Sebastopol before which we sit down at our Thanksgiving festival, there is surely something to be said on both sides.

The time consumed in dinners is often spoken of as if it were a burden which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear. So it would be if we gave the two or three hours to solid eating. But, as things go, dinners may be, and often are, one of the most agreeable forms which social intercourse takes on. There is always—or at least there can be—a degree of fitness and harmony in the guests. There are order and tranquillity, and a field for all sorts of verbal entertainment. Even an indifferent neighbor is tolerable if the company be not so large as to forbid general conversation; if it be, of course the dinner loses its saving clause, and your salvation depends upon your vicinage. But compared with the crush and clamor of evening parties, their wear and tear of voice and vesture, or the insipid ruralities of the picnic, where Nature and Life meet and mock each other, dinners seem a diversion worthy of human beings.

I should be sorry to seem to advocate the use of wine at dinner. But if we banish wine, we ought also to banish the profusion for which wine is the only palliative. No doubt it would be healthier for us all to use such moderation in our feasts that there would be no call for any stimulant. But the country deacon just as

often as the city merchant sets before us a task to which unassisted nature is wholly incompetent. Yet temperance in eating is just as truly a Christian duty as abstinence in drinking. Probably, indeed, the number of those who fall into the temptation of eating too much at our overladen tables is far greater than of those who fall into the temptation of drinking to excess. The city and country alike, then, put a knife to their neighbor's throat, knowing him to be a man given to appetite—the country, I maintain, whetting it a little sharper, holding it a little closer, and pressing it a little harder than the city. Is the city, providing a remedy for its wrong, though at some hazard, a sinner beyond the country, which does the same wrong, but provides no remedy at all? We are in Holy Writ no more strenuously warned against wine-bibbers than against riotous eaters of flesh. The glutton and the drunkard are reckoned as yoke-fellows, and bound to the same goal. Let us, therefore, be simple and natural, eating our meat with gladness and singleness of heart, adding to it all the native vegetables and fruits that wise forethought and an honest income can command, remembering that, though better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith, the best thing of all is stalled ox garnished with herbs, and presided over by a love so wise as not to seek out many inventions of sweets and pastry.

Yet one would not willingly so far depart from the faith of his fathers as not to have mince-pies at Thanksgiving. Remembering the shelves that of old time used to stand loaded with these portentous sweets, the jars

of mince-meat that were wont to await in silence and darkness the hour that should bid them give up their juicy store to join the innumerable caravan that, with stately and majestic step, trod its eternal circle in and out of those closet doors—beginning with Thanksgiving, if circles can begin, filing slowing past Christmas, past New-year, and reaching well into, and sometimes beyond, the depths of midwinter—who am I that I should set up a new standard, and fly in the face of Providence? Now that we have brought the nation to our way of thinking, now that we have set our New England festival firm in the affections of the whole people, shall we rob it of one of its chief accompaniments? True, mince-pie is not a characteristic of the feast. Pumpkin-pies—which the refinements of these later days have transformed into squash—are rather the native growth of Thanksgiving, while mince-pies are the offshoots of Christmas and Merrie England. But long habit, common speech, and the Treaty of Washington have changed all that; and no Yankee housewife would feel that she had made her calling and election sure until she had garnished her larder with goodly rows of flaky and fearful pies.

I am the more strenuous on this point because I suspect we are somewhat inclined to take on airs regarding the past. Am I deceived in fancying that I detect a flavor of condescension, not to say of mild contempt, toward our ancestors even in our very act of celebrating their feast? We are not simply and devoutly grateful for mercies vouchsafed, but we thank thee, O Lord, that we are not as other men are—even these

grandfathers. It would seem as if we needed the discomfort and disadvantage of their lives for a foil to the comfort and brilliance of our own. We can not be quite happy without assuming that they were miserable.

But were our fathers as badly off as we think? They had fewer of the arts and contrivances than we. They brought their water from wells outdoors, and they shivered somewhat before their great fires in their great rooms. But they never experienced the anguish of waking on a winter morning to find an icicle hanging stiff from each little silver water-pipe, and the plumber twelve miles away, and engaged twelve houses ahead! They drew their water in honest buckets, with honest well-sweeps, and drank and thanked God, and were never bewildered with the various demerits of various metals. We send hot air-pipes through our houses like veins through the body, and we shelter ourselves with double windows and storm-doors, and wonder how they of old times survived the winters; but a house near by, whose building no man remembers, is a marvel of warmth and snugness even to our modern notions. It is low-roofed and small-windowed, with panes many and minute; but its walls are admirably contrived to keep out the cold—which is an excellent thing in Northern houses—and delicate plants, which die in the frosts of a modern furnace-heated drawing-room, laugh to scorn the long winter nights in this low, large, wood-warmed parlor. Our forefathers may never have known what it was to be thoroughly comfortable from December to April, but if they were a little cold around the

shoulders, as they sat before their blazing fires, they were surely warm around the heart. There is something glowing to the imagination in the leap and flicker of flames, and we do not need so much fire to keep us warm, if we can see what fire there is. The straight-backed chairs and sanded floors of old were not so luxurious as our easy lounges and heavy carpets; but for those very chairs, all stiff and straight as they are, we are ready to pay fabulous prices to-day, and the latest effort of science, the conclusion of her closest investigations, is an urgent request for us all to discard our carpets, which gather dust and shelter miasms, and cherish, if they do not breed disease, and return to bare floors, and health, and vigor. So it seems that in many things we have but boxed the compass, and come around to very nearly the same point where we found our grandfathers. Be sure, those excellent and ever-to-be-revered gentlemen had a far more tolerable time of it than we usually suspect.

Yes, and a far more cheerful and jolly time of it.

We count them good soldiers, devout church-goers, prim, virtuous, but rather ascetic; seldom mirthful, never freakish or gamesome, doing even their courting in solemn Scriptural phraseology. Fie upon you, narrow-minded modern! Our fathers and mothers, nay, even our great-great grandfathers and grandmothers were young men and women in their day, who ate and drank, and made merry, who sang and danced, and—shall we say it?—flirted as outrageously as do you, youths and maidens, in gay neck-ties and bouffant paniers. They may have written, not spoken, "ye meet-

ing-house," where we should say "the church;" possibly they were a little more demure than we, but in every generation, in every garb, youth is high-hearted, and love is eager, and our grandmothers were only the more winsome with their demure looks, and their ways a little coy.

Here is a letter written sixty years ago by a girl in her early bloom. The paper is rough and yellow, but is it any more rough and yellow than some of the tinted note-sheets of our last invoice from Paris? It is at least barred in precisely the same fashion, and must have been easier to write on than is much of our smooth and slippery elegance, which deceives the pen and repels the ink. This letter opens quaintly and didactically with dignified reflections on the sweets of friendship, and the uncertainty of life; but the fresh young blood bounds anon, and we are presently in the midst of jests, and compliments, and blushes, and teasings, and all the light artillery of girls. "Go and see mother as often as you can," says the merry maiden, spending her first winter in the city, "and tell her I never was so wild in my life as I now am." It is not the message of an austere daughter to a grim parent, but surely of love to love, on both sides cheerful, happy, sympathetic.

Nor, on the other hand, do we render our ancestors justice when we make their merry-making consist in gross and heavy overfeeding. True, they did pile their tables high, but with their active outdoor work they could not live by bread alone. Life with them was, moreover, it must be admitted, rather limited in the way of operas, and concerts, and lectures, in the way of

easy roads and luxurious carriages. How could they express their hospitality but by flowing bowls and smoking boards? Have we improved so much upon them that we dare make a note of it? Have we wrought all the brittleness out of our houses that we dare throw stones at theirs? How many householders are there whose first, or at least second thought at the advent of a friend is not of what shall we eat, what shall we drink? We do not reckon it in ourselves gross or vulgar. We set before our friends four or five, or a dozen courses, where the family table is amply furnished with two or three, and is sometimes content with one. It is not that we fancy our friends given to appetite, or that they have come to us for the sake of eating and drinking; but we long always in all ways to do them honor even beyond service, and love is justified in ministering even to material wants in its own lavish and delicate fashion. It is not profusion, it is not even prodigality that makes vulgarity; it is the motive which underlies them. In the overabundance of our ancestral hospitality shall we find any thing more utterly coarse and debasing than our modern custom of parading "The Presents" at wedding-feasts? If Emerson says truly, "The only gift is a portion of thyself" —who gives of his love the most refined token; he who sets before his friend the fatlings of his own flock, the white wheat of his own fields, the dainty viands of his own devising, or he who coolly reckons up his own income, the circumstances of his friend, the degree of their acquaintance, and on a mathematical calculation buys a plated milk-pitcher of the nearest jeweler, and is mor-

tified by seeing "solid silver" appended to his neighbor's cake-basket in the printed list of presents, while his own, being uncharacterized, is open to the dreadful suspicion of being—what it is—a sham? We believe that the world has never seen a hospitality more genial, more hearty, or even more appropriately expressed, than that which was dispensed, primarily to their friends, but practically to all comers, in the spacious and plenteous farm-houses of those valiant, tender, manly, and many-sided men who are known to us mainly as stern and somewhat forbidding ancestors.

But I have got on only so far in my dutiful preparations for Thanksgiving as to cut from the newspaper a rule for making mince-pies. There I obey Mr. Sumner's injunction to Mr. Stanton, and "stick." When you read the rule, you find so much beef suet, and chopped stuff, and grated things, and commingling and confusion, that you lose heart at the outset. For Cinder Ella knows naught of mince-pies; and the only advantage I have over her is that I know one when I see it. I have but to sigh, "Mince-pie!" and my angel will move heaven and earth; but she will bring about some wonderful combination of fire and flour—*monstrum horrendum malformum*—which she will set on the table triumphantly, and will never suspect that it is not a mince-pie of the most straitest sect. I shall know that it is incomestibility and indigestibility raised to the fourth power; but I shall not know what makes it so.

No. If mince-pies are indispensable to Thanksgiving, I must go into the kitchen myself. I must study up the whole subject. I must buy the goods, and su-

pervise all their boilings and weighings and flavorings —which things I hate. And after all my trouble I shall have on my hands a vast array of viands, which will be to me for a temptation and a torment; for vanity and vexation of spirit and body.

Is there no way by which I can serve two masters? Can I not honor a godly ancestry without ravaging my own domestic peace and personal comfort? To meet the duties of filial piety, must I sacrifice myself on the altar of mince-piety? If I could buy half a dozen mince-pies just to celebrate with! I shall have friends enough at my board that day to share the primal curse, and we could divide and conquer. But a bake-house pie!

> "Oh, why are bakers made so coarse,
> Or palates made so fine?
> On pies that might appall a horse
> Shall man be made to dine?"
>
> COWPER (*with variations*).

Why, when the principle of co-operation is fairly discovered, are we so slow of heart to make the most of it? It is cheaper to hire the factory to weave your calico than it is to weave it yourself. But, also, the factory calico is finer and smoother than your home-made. It must be cheaper to hire the factory to make your mince-pies than to make them yourself. But, alas! the factory will not make good pies. The crust is sour and heavy and hateful; the body of the pie is tough and dry and stringy and lumpy. A miserable pretense, an exasperating hypocrisy, is the average bought pie, the restaurant pie—

"Which none can love, which none can thank,
Creation's blot—creation's blank."

So is the "baker's loaf," a light, dry, sour shaving, good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. If there were no such thing as a pie or a loaf to be bought, one would take courage and exhort to combined action; but every day or so the bakers' carts go jingling by to tell us that the principle of co-operation is adopted only to be abused.

"Pancakes and fritters,
Say the bells of St. Peter's;
Fools and wiseacres,
Say the bells of the bakers."

How gladly in the country would we buy all our bread, at least through the summer months! and the bread peddlers make it as feasible as the city shop—make it even more convenient, for they come to our very doors; but the bravely labeled carts bring only mockery and an inflated chip; so we build our fires and heat our houses, with the thermometer already raging up into the nineties, for bread we must have, and not a stone, even with its specific gravity left out. And so, instead of a good genius sending us sweet, light, wholesome pies to our own great relief and its reasonable profit, an ogre will continue to concoct malevolent abominations, and we must turn every peaceful home into a toiling, moiling pie-factory on a small, and therefore on an extravagant scale.

And yet there is a ray of light. I do not hope wholly to reconstruct the nation, but might I not insert my small wedge into the log? All my neighbors will be

making delicious pies. Suppose I engage one of them to make me a certain number. They will be home-made pies, and yet they will be bought pies. When Solomonia is making her own batch, she will hardly feel the exertion or the cost of half a dozen more. I will offer her baker's price, or her own if she prefer it, and possibly I may inoculate her with a love of trade, and she will be permanent pie-maker to my majesty. To be sure, I shall be the town-talk for incapacity and unthrift; but think of the "week before Thanksgiving" free from suet and the sound of the chopping-knife and the dread ordeal of raisin-stoning! Come ridicule, scorn, contumely! I will arise and go to my neighbor!

Ah! but my neighbor comes to me! and

> "Now gentle gales
> Fanning their odoriferous wings dispense
> Native perfumes,"

and all Arabia breathes from yonder basket—Arabia and the creamy fatness of New England harvests, and the Yule-tide cheer of merrie England, and the fruits and spices of the Golden Year. Oh, abstinence! where are the charms that sages have seen in thy face?

Peace on earth, good-will to men! It is the sentiment that underlies all feasting, whether we name it the Thanksgiving of the sons or the Christmas of the fathers, whether we celebrate it with song and dance or psalm and prayer.

With wars many, and disasters many, with battle, and murder, and sudden death, we are often and again

tempted to think that there is no peace on earth, and that the heavens bear an ill-will to men. Our holidays are clouded with the smoke of a burning city, of villages laid waste, of a land desolate and death-smitten. Peace on earth, good-will to men, with hundreds of families swept out upon a winter prairie, homeless by night, homeless through bitter months? Good-will to the aged and the sick, to women and little children rushing through burning woods from a devouring flame? Good-will to friends forever separated and desolate, to little ones suddenly orphaned, and mothers bereaved, and men robbed in a moment of the fruits of lifelong love and toil? Peace on an earth plundered of beauty and dignity, and doomed to ashes and ruin? Yes, peace on earth, good-will to men, in spite of fire and flood. Nay, the little one has not forgotten the thrill of that wonderful hour when the sorrow of Chicago came pulsating over the land. One moment of stunned and speechless shock, and then the world moved. From the scattered hamlet under the hill, from the teeming cities beyond the sea, rang one voice of sympathy and succor. The ruin of Chicago was great, but of all the flames fed on, nothing was so priceless as that which rose up out of the flame—the stately, stainless flower of human sympathy, of universal brotherhood.

But "ah!" sighs Fastidia, born under the shadow of Boston State-house, and with the intensest pride of Boston quickening all her bright blood, while she berates it with a lover's fond abuse. "It is all very well for a dapper little city, pert and upstart like Chicago, to be burned; but staid old Boston!" And indeed it does seem

an unparalleled audacity. That the flame should lick along the streets of the Hancocks, and the Otises, and the Thayers, and the Appletons as greedily as if they were but vulgar paths, this indeed may well spread dismay. But if staid Boston will discard ancestral sense, and rear its roofs of pine and paper, the destroying angel will not stay his hand for the storied names of yesterday, nor even for the solid men of to-day. Yet to all the living, peace and good-will! Christmas has to all one song, if our ears can only be attuned to the singing. Better than granite piles—especially with tarred roofs above them—is the energy that built them, the spirit that survives them. On Saturday a man was rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing—enriched by his own sagacity and industry. On Sunday the fire has swept him back to the starting-point of his youth. "Will you shake hands with a poor man?" is his undaunted greeting. On Monday he is off to begin life anew.

"All night long the noise of battle rolled"—the battle between human power and elemental force. All the long, bright autumn Sunday, the sweet, serene Indian summer day, the smoke of that fierce fight rose and rolled, column upon column, stretching across the wide, level horizon, heaping up beauty for the brilliant sunset; through the plains below us the telegraph wires were flashing tidings, calls, responses, orders, and over the long lines of railroads from all quarters dashed the laden trains, bearing eager crowds. "Poor old Boston!" "Dear old Boston!" we sighed with heavy hearts, forgetting all her pride, and remembering only her

peril; yet most pathetic of all, unspeakably touching and tearful, was the far, faint sound of Boston bells calling through the second midnight for help in her deadly need. And how nobly help came! From North and South, from near and far, men rushed to the rescue, nor were there wanting those who dared to die. Shall we fail in holiday greetings? Shall we distrust peace on earth? Shall we doubt the coming of new and golden years while thus, even now, their feet are beautiful upon the mountains?

The best things of this world are imperishable. Energy, resolution, courage, a dauntless persistence—fire can not destroy them. Gentleness, unselfishness, tenderness, magnanimity—floods can not overwhelm them. In order to have happy festivals, it is not necessary to transact affairs in a five-story warehouse with marble facings. He alone holds a happiness worth the having who holds the trust of those who live with him. Whose click at the gate is music, whose voice at the door is solace, whose face at the fireside is rest, whose presence everywhere is sunshine—he it is to whom Christmas is truly the Christ-day, whose year is ever happy and ever new. To you—for it is you I mean, oh gentle and friendly reader, I proffer heart-felt salutations. As simple, as noble, you do not suspect what strength goes in the clasp of your hand, what force, and sustenance, and good cheer are voiced in your welcoming words! It is you who make life sweet and wholesome. It is you who soften the rigors of its inevitable frosts, who temper its raging heats, and moisten its parched noondays with the dew-drops of the morning. To you, thought-

ful and grateful husband, wise and sustaining wife, pleasant and steadfast friend, upright and honorable in all things, in love and life alike tried and sure, to you I give glad greetings of the sacred and merry Christmas, and the fruitful, fair New Year.

THE END.

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